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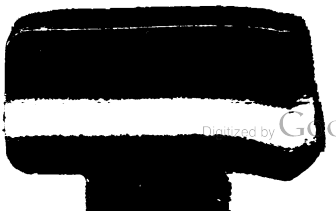

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CHILDREN OF THE WORLD.

VOL. I.

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CHILDREN OF THE WORLD.

A Novel.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

PAUL HEYSE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

CHAPMAN & HALL, LIMITED, 11, HENRIETTA ST.

COVENT GARDEN.

1882.

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PREFACE.

It must always be very doubtful how much good the friends of freethought and of tolerance do by their protests against the melancholy spirit of intolerance which is so rife among us. This doubt occurs forcibly to me now that I have completed the translation of the noble work of which this is a preface. Those in whom tolerance is the most absent will not be likely to read it, or if they do it will merely excite their horror. (For instance, those who style the unorthodox a "hideous crew," could they be reached by such a book as 'Die Kinder der Welt?' they would be quite incapable of understanding it, still less of believing in it.) It is not necessary to agree with all Heyse's conclusions to be capable of feeling how

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earnestly and passionately, though perhaps at times one-sidedly, he has written; and there may be some to whom it will be a revelation (surely one productive of real good) to be taught as beautifully as he has done it, that freethinking is compatible not merely with morality, but with the highest purity and self-sacrifice. With or without religion, there will be but few men who can attain to this; but are we to look even for common truth and honesty only among those who, like the courtiers in Hans Andersen's story, solemnly declare that they see the emperor's new clothes, or at any rate gaze with half-shut eyes lest they should see clearly that his Majesty is naked? Of course there are numbers who really do see the clothes, and these one must respect.

The clergy tell us that the growth of atheism is the cause of the increasing impurity among the lower classes. If this were so, then those that have doubts should hide them by all means; but I firmly believe that unutterable harm is done by this opinion (or rather feeling, for in many cases it is much more an unreasoning feeling than a real opinion); and if the

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clergyman who has a living faith in what he teaches could only have the liberality and courage to say to the doubter, "Of course I feel my standpoint to be immeasurably higher and happier than yours, but in spite of your doubts, I believe in the possibility of your acting purely and honestly," irreparable mischief would, I am sure, often be avoided. I must now add that Heyse has formally authorized me to publish this translation; and though his permission is not legally necessary, I look upon it as most precious, and feel great gratitude for it; and that he has signified his approval of my work. I will conclude by translating a sentence out of one of his letters to me:—"I will now express the hope that you yourself will have happiness in your work, and that the cry of anathema raised by certain circles will not cause you to doubt whether the time be yet come for offering this book to the English public. As far as I am concerned, the most beautiful and precious fruit which it has borne to me has been this: in spite of its utter rejection by the orthodox, not a word of personal vituperation to give me pain has

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reached me, rather so much encouragement from every side has fallen to my share, that I perceived with joy that the world has already freed itself from many of the fetters which the previous century struggled to shake off, but, in spite of revolution, without attaining its object."

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CHILDREN OF THE WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

In the Dorotheen Strasse, in the middle of the Latin quarter of Berlin, the modest, scholarlike colouring of which seems more and more likely to be washed out by the approach of fashionable civilization, there stood, a few years ago, a small two-storied house, narrow-chested, insignificant, and as it were intimidated by its broad-shouldered neighbours, though each year it received a wash of delicate pink flesh-colour, and had been quite lately ornamented by a new lightning conductor on its old worn gable. But the owner, a respectable master shoemaker, who had certainly thriven sufficiently to settle comfortably in a new and more elegant house, had enjoyed all the pleasant things which life had brought him under this slanting roof, and though he was in other ways an enlightened man, and opposed to sentimental prejudices, yet it would have seemed to him the most arrant ingratitude to have turned his back on the old witness and protector of his fortune. Here, in almost every corner, he had laid his head, from the little garret where, as a poor apprentice, he had many a night not been able to close an eye because of the

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"drip, drip" from the eaves, to the room of state on the first floor where the bridal bed had been set up, when, after a satisfactory apprenticeship, he had, in virtue of his position as foreman, married his master's daughter, his master having died very suddenly. But he was much too economical to keep this distinguished abode for more than six months, and had since then inhabited the rooms on the second floor, which showed that he was easily satisfied, for two children had meantime grown up there, and the little house had only a frontage of three windows.

The lodgings on the first floor were let to an old childless couple to whom the landlord would on no account have given warning. For in the white-haired old man he honoured one who had formerly been a celebrated tenor, whom he had heard and admired in his prime, and in the little shrivelled old woman a no less celebrated actress of the same period. The last dozen years they had been in receipt of a pension, and they passed their quiet days silently and songlessly in their little rooms, which were ornamented with faded laurel wreaths, and pictures of their distinguished fellow-artists; no one really knew how they spent their time, for they never received any visits. The landlord imagined that these celebrities gave his house a certain artistic sanctity, and he never failed, when the old couple returned from their little constitutional at mid-day, and customers happened to be in the shop, to allude to the departed glory of these wrinkled great ones, as one who had been an eye-witness of it.

On the ground floor was the shop, over which hung a black sign with the words "Boot and Shoemaker, Gottfried Feyertag," in gold letters. The large brown riding-boot and the red slipper which had originally stood on each side of this sign had since been painted out by the master, as it offended him to go on seeing them when they were no longer the fashion. For even in his trade he marched

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with the times, and he could hardly correct his shop sign each time the fashion changed. Down here he allowed his wife to reign, while he himself spent most of the day in the workshop at the back, and kept a sharp eye on his four or five workmen. A narrow passage led past the shop into a small well-like yard, in the middle of which grew a tall acacia tree; three-fourths of it were dead for want of air and sunshine, the top only being adorned with a few pale-green consumptive leaves, which each autumn grew yellow several weeks before any other foliage. The little daughter of the house, when still at school, had made the foreman build her an arbour in the corner near the pump; it was formed of thin poles primitively nailed together, and overgrown with gay scarlet-runners, which did their duty each summer by blossoming, but never in the best years produced more than a handful of unhappy-looking beans. But in a small bed along the so-called sunny side of the house were to be seen in great luxuriance all sorts of plants which flourish in cisterns and cellars from love of the dark, and in the height of summer, when at noon the sun really did reach down so far, the little spot looked quite bright in spite of all its poverty, especially when the fair-haired Reginchen, now a maiden of seventeen, sat there upon a stool, and, perhaps, if it were Sunday, read a robber story from the lending library.

A grey neglected house which stood at the back, connected with the front one only by a party wall, had also two stories with three windows in each, looking into this yard, and a steep, crazy staircase, which creaked and groaned at every step, led through the ground floor, on which were the workshop and the workmen's bed-rooms, to the upper stories. On the night on which our story begins it was stiflingly hot in this hole. It was one of those nights towards the end of summer when there is not a breath of air, no

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dew, but when the dust which has been disturbed during the day floats down in soft invisible clouds, and oppresses everything that breathes as with a nightmare.

A slight young man, in a straw hat and a grey summer coat, opened the house door gently, and, walking on tiptoe, passed through the narrow passage of the front house and then across the stones with which the court was paved. He could not resist setting the pump-handle in motion, and refreshing his face and hot hands with the water, which was certainly none of the coolest. The noise of the pump seemed to wake nobody, at least nothing moved on either side. He stood still for a time, to let the air dry him, while he looked up at the windows of the upper story of the back house, in which the bright moonlight was reflected. One stood open, and a large white cat lay on the window-sill, seemingly asleep. The windows were also open on the first floor, and a faint light shone through them, colouring a bit of the trunk of the acacia a pale red.

There was nothing very remarkable in all this; indeed the thoughts of the solitary night wanderer below at the well seemed far removed from the miserable narrow yard, and to be busy in an enchanted garden. At all events, he seated himself with a smile, as if he were unutterably content, on a little stool in the green arbour, and pulled to pieces a faded leaf which he had first pressed to his lips; but from the open window of the workshop just over him he heard the loud snores of one of the workmen who had apparently found his room too small, while another appeared to be speaking in a dream. A smell of fresh leather, pitched thread, and varnish penetrated into his corner, and would have been enough, combined with the vulgar sounds above mentioned, to disgust anybody else with his midsummer night's dream. But he in the straw hat seemed unable to make up his mind to exchange his hard seat under the scanty leaves for

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his bed. He had taken off his hat, and was leaning against the wall, the dampness of which seemed pleasant to his hot head.

Now he looked through the thin wood-work up into the sky, into the small patch left visible above the square of brick wall, and began to count the stars. The top of the acacia shimmered in the moonlight as if it were worked in silver, and the wall opposite, as far as the pale light reached, had the appearance of being covered with delicate ice or hoar frost. "No," said the solitary one down in the arbour, "life is after all worth something! Certainly all that is most beautiful—as beautiful as those stars—is almost as far as they; but what does that matter? Anything one may admire, that one cannot forget, is it not one's own as much as, ay more than, if one had it in a cupboard, and had lost the key?"

The stroke of a neighbouring church clock disturbed this half-unconscious, dreamy soliloquy. "One o'clock," said he to himself. "It is about time to think of sleep; and what if Balder, in spite of all I said, has waited up for me?"

He rose hastily and went into the house, when, after groping carefully up the rickety stairs and reaching the landing on the first floor, he saw to his astonishment that the door was half open. A little dark ante-chamber led into a larger room, which was lighted by a small sleepy lamp. On the sofa behind the table lay a woman, still completely dressed, absorbed in a book. The light fell on a sharply-cut, gloomy face, past early youth, with very dark hair and strongly-marked eyebrows; it was a face which gained a certain charm from its expression of scornful strength. The reader's thick hair had got loose; she wore a simple cotton gown, which left the arms and shoulders bare. No movement of the face betrayed whether she had heard the approaching footsteps; but as the late-comer stood still for a moment on the landing,

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and looked through the two doors, she did not raise her eyes from her book, and did not even put back the locks of hair which had fallen over her forehead.

"You are still up, Fräulein Christiane?" said he, advancing on to the threshold of the ante-room.

"As you see, Herr Doctor," answered she in a deep voice, without disturbing herself. "I cannot sleep for the heat, and perhaps also because of this book. I was so absorbed that I never even heard you. But it certainly is bed-time. Good night!"

"May I ask what book it is that prevents your sleeping?" he asked, still standing in the dark entrance.

"Why not?" was the answer, after a little hesitation. "Indeed you have a special right to do so; it is your book. Our landlord, Meister Feyertag, borrowed it from you weeks ago, and yesterday he said so much about it that I begged to have it for a day. Now I cannot put it down."

He laughed, and came in altogether.

"Then this old rat-catcher has bewitched you too, has he? every man and woman now must dance to his pipe, though they may think his tunes horrible. You are no doubt reading the chapter on women, from which our honest landlord daily quotes the most insidious bits to his wife, and though it makes you angry you cannot leave it. He knows well enough, the old sinner, how to go to work, he has not read his Goethe in vain.

> Doch wem gar nichts dran gelegen
> Scheinet, ob er reizt und rührt,
> Der beleidigt, der verführt.*

"You are mistaken," replied she, as she sat up on the sofa so that the green lamp-shade darkened her face. "I have indeed read that chapter, but it made

* He who does not seem to care whether he irritates or affects you is sure to do so.

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no particular impression on me, whether good or bad. It is a caricature, very like and yet quite false. He seems only to have known women of a certain class. 'Dis moi qui tu hantes,' &c. Bah! we are accustomed to that. But what has given me a great respect for him is his chapter 'on the sorrows of the world.' For almost each proposition I could supply an illustration, quote an example from that which I myself have gone through, or seen others go through. And I know too why all the same one likes to read it: because he says it out so quietly, without grumbling, as if it were so entirely a matter of course, that one sees how foolish it would be to complain, or to desire anything better for one's own miserable self than what has been bestowed on a whole world. You must lend me his other writings."

"We will talk about it another time," said he. "You must not think me one of those philosophical professors who would want to silence the wonderful man. It is indeed sad that he is not still alive to answer all kinds of questions, which he carefully avoided in his sybaritical retreat in the 'Swan' at Frankfort on the Main. However that may be, it is too hot to-night to heat one's head by talking philosophy. Do throw aside your Schopenhauer, and play me something—perhaps the moonlight sonata, or something equally deep and sweet. I should like to wash away the contemptible ballet music which I have been obliged to hear."

"You and ballet music?"

"Yes; does it not sound absurd? But it is true all the same. You wonder how it has happened? Well, you know, at all events by sight, our tyrant, the so-called medicinalrath, my college friend and doctor in ordinary, who mounts our ladder every day. Well, this summer I rather over-worked myself in order to get through a prize composition, quite an unnecessary effort, for with my heresies I need not hope for

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academical honours, and all I gained for my trouble was a stupid head so full of rebellious nerves that it was almost as if I had lost all power of thinking, or was on the verge of some innocent form of madness. A journey, a few weeks on the Rigi, would have been the best cure, but our doctor has good reasons for not recommending anything so luxurious, and he believes that it might be possible to find a cheaper way of procuring a holiday for the thinking machine. He proposed that I should play cards, start a collection of beetles, break in a poodle, or fall in love. Unfortunately I have no turn for any of these simple and doubtless judicious methods, so to-day he brought me a ticket for the opera; he always has friends both before and behind the scenes. There was to be a new ballet, which was to be too much even for an old hardened play-goer, to say nothing of a whimsical fellow of my stamp, who for the last ten years has not entered an opera-house. Well, I could not escape the experiment; if a man has a doctor for a friend, he must expect to be experimentalized on, and anyhow a ballet is better than a silver tube through one's body." He smiled in a peculiar way, half pleased, half mysteriously.

"Do play me the moonlight sonata," he again implored. "Life is beautiful, Fräulein Christiane, in spite of all the sorrows of the world. What splendid roses you have in that glass! May I——"

He took a little nosegay out of a vase which stood on the table and pressed it against his face. The overblown flowers fell to pieces suddenly, and the petals covered the book.

"Good heavens!" said he, reddening in confusion; "what have I done? Please forgive me!"

"Certainly, Herr Doctor, if you are reasonable and go upstairs now to sleep off your dissipation, for you are in a state—! You must know best what has caused it."

"I! I did not know——"

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"To ask me to play you something at half-past one in the morning! Do you want to wake all the people in the house? From over the way they can see through the window, and besides——"

She stood up, interrupted herself, and walked once or twice through the tidily-arranged room, which, except for the piano, her bed, and a bookcase, did not contain much furniture. She now pushed back the hair from her forehead and shoulders, and, with her bare arms crossed over her breast, stood quietly before the window. A sigh swelled this breast, under which she had learned to suppress so sternly all her thoughts and feelings. She waited with apparent calmness for him to go.

"I must indeed appear strange to you," he said frankly; "for months past we have lived in the same house, and yet I have never profited by your vicinity, except to pay you one only visit in order to beg you not to play during the hours which I have set apart for severe work, and now, in the middle of the night, I come upon you and take liberties as if I were an old acquaintance. Excuse my craziness, and—good night!"

He bowed slightly towards the window and left the room.

As soon as she had heard him go up the stairs she hurried into the dark ante-room, locked the outer door, and even drew the bolt. Then she stood awhile listening to him. A trembling crept over her whole body, which forced her to lean against the door and take fast hold of the handle. Slowly he went up a few steps, and then stopped, as if a sudden thought had struck him; then she suddenly drew herself up, sighed heavily, and returned with unsteady steps into the sitting-room. Her gown seemed to oppress her, she got rid of it as a butterfly gets rid of its chrysalis, and then seated herself in the most airy night costume at the open piano. It was an old, very worn instru-

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ment, with little tone, and as she passed her slight fingers gently over the keys it sounded outside on the landing like a harp at a great distance.

The young man had just reached the top step when the sound reached him.

"There, now she *is* playing the sonata," said he to himself. "A strange, wilful person! I wonder what her life has been! After to-day I will pay a little more attention to her. It is a pity she is so ugly,—and yet, what does it matter? There is beauty in the tips of her fingers. What music that is!"

He stood awhile listening to the well-known wonderful tones which seemed to express all that was only confusion within him. Suddenly he heard a voice from within:

"Is that you, Edwin?"

"Yes, it is indeed," was the answer, and the next moment he had opened the door, and was in the room, which was all lighted up by the calm moonlight.

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CHAPTER II.

This room, which was called by the friends of its owner the "tub," was a large apartment with three windows; the walls were coloured a pale grey, the boards were bare, and over the windows instead of curtains hung three narrow slips of green calico—in fact the whole room was extremely simple. There was a desk before the right-hand window, a little turning lathe before the other, between the windows two high book-shelves, two beds against the wall, a couple of cane chairs, and little cupboards of white wood; lastly a low, smoky ceiling, in which here and there large cracks could be seen, and which looked likely to come down. But what, in spite of all its poverty, gave the room a certain air of distinction were two engravings from Raphael over the beds, each in a frame of plain brown wood, and over the book-shelves two antique busts, the head of Aristotle taken from the well-known Herma, and the dark-looking, iron-headed Demosthenes. The low stove was also ornamented with a work of art at which one could not tire of looking—the cast of Michael Angelo's young slave, who, with closed eyelids, lets his touchingly beautiful head sink back on his shoulder, as if weary of suffering and desirous of sleep. But the light of

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the moon did not reach so far, it only fell obliquely across the bed against the wall.

In this bed lay, with his eyes turned to the door, a young man with a pale, almost effeminately delicate face, surrounded by a mass of thick light hair. How old this youth might be it was difficult to guess from his features, for a boyish cheerfulness about the mouth was in curious contrast with the mature look in the beautifully-shaped eye. He was wrapped in a light coverlet, and a book lay open on the chair by him. As Edwin came in he raised himself with difficulty, and put out a pale, delicately-formed hand.

"Now," said he, "was it beautiful? Has it done you good?"

"Good evening, Balder," answered Edwin, "or rather good morning! You see I do everything thoroughly, even night revelling. But I see I must not leave you alone again, child. I really believe you have been reading by moonlight."

A deep red suffused the youth's face.

"Don't be angry with me," he said, in a clear, animated voice. "I could not sleep, and as the candle was burnt down, and the moonlight was so bright— But now, tell me all about it. Has the cure begun?"

"To-morrow we will talk as much as you wish; to-night, not another word, partly as a punishment for spoiling your eyes and heating your head. Such folly! Do you know your forehead is burning again?" and he stroked his soft hair with tender affection. "I shall complain of you to the doctor. And you don't seem to have touched your supper; there is your plate full of bread and butter!"

"I was not hungry," answered the boy as he let his head sink softly into the pillow, "and besides, I thought that if you came home late, and were hungry after all this excitement——"

Edwin came up to the bed with the plate in his hand.

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"If you do not wish me to be really angry, you deceitful fellow," said he, "you will be so good as to eat your share on the spot; to make it easy for you, I will undertake half of it. Good heavens! what a bother such a disobedient child is! Come, let us share as brothers, or to-morrow I will complain to Fräulein Regine, who will soon bring you to reason."

Again the youth's face blushed a deep red, but Edwin did as though he saw it not; he seated himself on the bed and began to eat, every now and then thrusting a bit into his brother's mouth, who bore it half laughingly.

"The bread is good," said Edwin; "the butter might be better, but that is Reginchen's weak side. Now for a drink, as fresh as we can get it out of our cellar."

He poured himself out a glass of water and drank it at a draught.

"Balder," said he, "I return to truth and nature after running the risk of being enervated by luxury. Only think, I ate an ice in the theatre! I could not do otherwise; everybody else did, and a philosopher must try everything. All the same, it was not worth the five groschen, for it taught me nothing new, and I was only sorry that *you* could not eat it. Once, and not again. Good night!"

While he was undressing he said, "This shameless moon! As soon as we have a little money to spare we must get some blinds, so as to be able to shut our eyes on such a night. However, this illumination is modest compared to that of the opera-house on a gala night. As I went into the box it struck me with such unpleasant strength, that I would gladly have taken flight and seen the whole business from outside in the corridor. You may verily believe, child, that it is the box-keepers who have the truest and best enjoyment. To walk about outside in the cool passages, on soft carpets, with the softened sound of

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the orchestra always in one's ear—now and then a noisy bit with drums and trumpets, which, deadened by its passage through the walls, sounds like a melodious thunderstorm; sometimes, when a great lady rustles in late, catching a glimpse through the opened door of the paradise of painted houris in tricots, of the fabulous sunsets and sunrises—truly an enviable situation in comparison with the unfortunate people inside, who in return for their money are forced to atone for the sins of Signor Taglioni on a velvet purgatory, while all their five senses together are being pounded as if with fists. A time will come when people will read with a shudder of this barbarism, and will covet the strong nerves which could have borne it."

"And yet you stayed till the end?"

"I? Well, at first I was very comfortable; the box for which I had a ticket is a little drawing-room, and it chanced to be quite empty at first. And then—but now I will shut the window. Don't you think it is getting rather cool? Even your friend Miezica has crept away."

Balder was silent, but while his eyes were apparently shut, he was all the time looking fixedly at his brother, who had absently thrown himself half-dressed on his bed and turned his face to the wall. Half an hour passed in this manner without either of them moving. Suddenly Edwin turned round, and his eyes met his brother's quiet, anxious look.

"Child," said he, "I see this will not do. For the first time in our lives we are acting a comedy with each other. I, at least, for I wished to keep something in my heart from you. It is regular folly! What has a man a brother for, especially one to whom he is, so to say, married, if he does not share everything with him in brotherly fashion, worries, as well as bread and butter? I will come and sit by you, and confess what has happened. Certainly nothing very wonderful.

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Many people have already met with something similar, but when one meets it in one's own person, and for the first time, all thy philosophy, Horatio, does not suffice to make one dream what a curious, uncomfortable, oppressive, melancholy—in one word—mad state it is."

He had sprung from his bed, and now crouched at the foot of Balder's, half sitting, half leaning back, so that he was in shadow, while he half looked away from his brother at the opposite wall.

"Prepare yourself to hear unheard-of things," said he, still in a tone which showed that he was forcing himself to speak. "Or perhaps your prophetic eyes have discovered what I want to tell you? All the better! In that case my confession will only weary you, and one of us at least will fall asleep. The fact is, O best of brothers, it is ridiculous to say it, but I do believe it is only too true, that I am in the state for which our doctor wished, in order to drive out the devil through Beelzebub, that is to say, I am in love, and as hopelessly, thoughtlessly, madly, as any inexperienced young moth who has flown into the candle.

"Only listen, child," he continued, as he again sprang up, and walked about in the room, "how it all came about, and then you will see the extent of this madness. You know that I am nine and twenty, and yet I have happily escaped this disease; it is not necessary for every one to have scarlet fever. As regards the healthy and natural attraction of 'Des ewig weiblichen,'* I was old enough when our dear mother died to see clearly how unlikely it was that one should meet a second time with one like her. Every human heart needs love in daily life to keep up the necessary blood-heat, but our brotherly affection has been enough for that, to say nothing of humanity,

* By one translator rendered "the eternal womanly," by another the "woman soul."

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which, miserable and unamiable as it is, truly needs love, and which keeps us always on the alert; and then, what is the use of having made the science of pure reason one's calling if, after all, one makes a fool of oneself for the first woman's face, as any ignorant, thoughtless fellow might have done, without any other sufficient reason than that the lightning has struck, Heaven knows why? It seems impossible, but I fear I have made the impossible possible."

He seated himself again on the bed, but this time so that he turned his full face to Balder.

"Now I will allow you to study me," he said, smiling; "don't spare me. This is what a man looks like who has entirely lost his bearings, and whom neither sense, wisdom, nor pride, nor any other rubbish, can help one bit. I have always read the story of the magnetic mountain with an inward shudder. Years ago, with the insolence of youth, I always thought that if I had only been on board I should have set all the sails, have made so many men row, should have steered in such a manner that the spell would have been unable to touch me. And for the first hour I was of the same opinion this evening; but then,

Fairy stories wondrous strange
Women's arts to truth will change.

The helm is broken, the oar refuses to work, and just that part of me which is steel and iron follows most irresistibly the attraction of the magnet, and helps to bring about the shipwreck."

He leant back again, and passed his hand over his forehead; his hand trembled, his forehead was covered with a cold perspiration.

"There is only one thing which I do not understand," said Balder, as he drew himself a little to one side in order to make room for his brother. "Why should it all be hopeless?"

"Only listen, my boy, and you will understand

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everything, even that which is incomprehensible, about which I am still puzzling. I am no painter, and can only give you an outline of a certain face. Well, I enter the box, which is still empty; I hope it will remain so. In my summer costume, which cost fourteen thalers, without gloves, I did not feel very fit for society, and the box-keeper had glanced at me, as much as to say, 'You look as if you belonged to the gallery, friend, rather than to this holy of holies, into which I usually show only people who belong to the great world, or the *demi-monde*.' Indeed, however silly it may appear, I do not much like seating myself on a chair that is better dressed than I am. Now, having gone in for it, I resolved to bear myself more elegantly, as I had observed my young diplomats do at private lectures—ways which till now have struck me as fools' tricks. So I lay myself back in true English fashion in the arm-chair, and glance half at the stage, half at the stalls. As I have said before, there was such mad confusion down below, the poor creatures, in spangled gauze and wreaths of flowers, threw their arms and legs about so wildly, the fiddles quivered so, that I was beginning to think, If that goes on, I go away. Suddenly the door of the box flies open, wide open (I had squeezed through a very modest opening), and one young lady rustles in; a tiny little servant in livery, with high shirt-collars which nearly cut off his large red ears, takes her blue silk cloak, the box-keeper rushes forward with a contemptuous side-look at me, pushes the seat straight, and officiously places a playbill on the front of the box. The lady says a half-audible word to the boy, and then seats herself in the corner place nearest to the stage, puts a lovely little opera-glass up to her eyes, and begins, without taking the slightest notice of me, to give herself up with all her heart to artistic enjoyment.

"I ought now to describe her to you, but that is not

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so easy. Do you remember the picture which is in the Dresden Gallery, by a Frenchman whose name I forget; stay, I think he was called Liotard—we saw a photograph of it in the doctor's book of beauty, La belle Chocoladière was written underneath? Well, the profile before me was very much like that, and yet very, very different; much more delicate, slighter, more childlike, and without the cold-hearted pretension. The face of the little Grisette in the picture has by degrees been changed by her many adorers and the habit of breaking hearts to pure alabaster. It was only the cut of the nose, the long eyelashes, the proud little mouth—but your fancy must fill up the rest. Well, the first quarter of an hour passed well enough, only that I, from the very first moment, saw nothing but my neighbour, who only let me see a small quarter of her face, charming as the new moon; I could therefore give all my attention to her dark-brown hair, which, without any ornament, formed as it were a thick crown above her pure white brow, and was fastened up behind in Italian fashion with two coral pins. Below on her white neck a few little curly ends of hair peeped forth, and though they were in the shade, I envied them. As for her dress, whether it were in the newest fashion, and according to women's ideas faultless, I cannot tell you. I am no judge, but a certain instinct told me that nothing could be more tasteful, though so simple; and on her charming person not an ornament of any kind, not even ear-rings, the gown being fastened at the neck by a small bow of velvet, no brooch. The hands which held the opera-glass, tiny little hands they were, hid themselves in light-grey gloves, so I could not see whether she wore rings. I remarked that she made quite a sensation as she entered the box. Hundreds of opera-glasses were at once directed towards her, and even the first *danseuse*, who was in the midst of her most wonderful jumps, ceased for a bit to be the sole

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attraction to her admirers. But all this homage left my fair one quite cold; she kept her eyes fixed on the stage with a pious earnestness that was touching and yet funny. And when the first act was over, and a storm of applause broke forth, it was charming to see how she quickly laid aside her opera-glass to join in the clapping, more like a child who cries 'please, please' for another biscuit, than like a high-born patroness of the fine arts, who for once condescends to take part in the applause of the populace. She had dropped her pocket-handkerchief, a snow-white lace-bordered thing like a cobweb, which could have been conveniently stowed away in a nut-shell. I picked it hastily up, and handed it to her, stammering a few not very original words. She looked calmly at me, with the air of a princess, and nodded a gracious thanks. Not one word did she bestow on me. Then she placed the opera-glass before her face and seemed to give herself up between the acts to assiduous study of the fashions; at all events she examined for a long time the box opposite, which was quite full of ladies.

"I would have given a great deal to have heard her voice, if only to know whether she was a foreigner; but however much I puzzled my brains, I could not think of one word to say; indeed she looked as if the smallest liberty on my part would be enough to make her rise from her seat and, with a piercing glance at me, leave me in solitude. I had just elaborated a very pretty remark on ballets in general, and on this one in particular, when the curtain drew up, and she again seemed completely absorbed in the play. A thought struck me like lightning, which, as you will agree, was very creditable to me, though it was of no avail. I left the box, ate the above-mentioned ice, and wiping my beard, I strolled up and down the corridor, as if bored with the piece, and inquired quite casually of the box-keeper whether he knew the lady who was sitting in the strangers' box. He declared,

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however, that he had never seen her before; the opera had only begun again to-day with this new ballet, for the first time after the holidays. So without having effected my purpose, I returned to my post. But I found that in the mean time my place had been taken: a very over-dressed foreign couple, American or English nabobs, who glittered all over with jewels, had stuck themselves in the best places next to my fair one. I was on the point of asserting my rights, when I saw how pleasant it would be to stand in the dark corner, to see and hear nothing of the smart insipidity which surrounded us, but to gaze my fill at the charming head, the little neck with the curly hair, the slight shoulders, and a little bit of the sweet face. I heard how the gentleman spoke to her in broken French; she answered without embarrassment in the best Parisian accent. Now I knew what I wanted to know. So she was an hereditary enemy in every sense of the word!

"If I tell you, Balder, that for the next two hours I stood like a statue, and thought of nothing but of how one may pass one's nine-and-twentieth birthday before one can see the meaning of the old legend of the serpent in Paradise, you will think me half mad. You will be wrong. I was *quite* mad, a warning example of the fallibility of all manly virtue. A hundred times did I ask pardon of old Father Wieland for having called him a miserable woman's slave because he makes his Greek philosophers, with all their strength of mind and stoical dignity, disgrace themselves for the smile of a Lais or a Musarion. In this case there had not been even a smile, still less any arts of seduction, and here was a poor *privat docent** of philosophy laying down his arms at discretion, because a haughty little nose, a pair of black eyelashes, with equally black wavy locks, had not taken the slightest notice of him.

"But you must go to sleep, child. I have nearly

* A lecturer at a university who has not yet got a professorship.

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finished; it must be very wearisome to a third person. Five minutes before the curtain fell for the last time she rose, as some one knocked gently at the door of the box; she swept by me, and I felt an electric shock down to the very tips of my toes, which was lucky, as I might otherwise not have recovered so suddenly from my petrifaction, and been able to follow her. Outside stood the gnome of the shirt-collars, with his light hair parted on his childish head, the blue hooded mantle over his arm, staring at her with wide-open, respectful eyes. She threw round her the soft covering almost without his help, though he stretched himself up on tip-toe, drew the hood over her head, and hastened to the staircase, the youth after her, also my humble self. Everybody whom she passed was struck, and looked after her with astonishment. I rejoiced with some malice that I was not the only one who was human.

"Below in the entrance an elegant carriage was waiting; the dwarf opened the door, made an unsuccessful attempt to help his mistress in, swung himself up behind, and the equipage rolled away, before I had had sense enough to jump into a droschke and to drive after her. Perhaps it is better so, I thought when I was alone again. What could it lead to? And now I made an effort to become once more a philosopher, and that in the most extreme sense of the word, namely, a *privat docent* of logic and metaphysics, an individual graciously endowed by the state with the permission *sub specie æterni* to starve, who, if he makes a fool of himself by falling in love with princesses, will lose the *venia legendia*, as he thereby proves his ignorance of the very first elements of philosophy. There, that is the whole story! I hoped to have been able to spare you, to have at last got rid of the spell if I first cooled my excited blood by a couple of hours in the night air. Unfortunately I have not succeeded. The lindens swarmed with lovers; one was as it were surrounded with music, and

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if one listened one seemed to hear stars shooting across the firmament, and lastly the sentimental moonshine, which completely finished the business.

"My last hope is in sleep, which has washed many a fever out of my blood. See, there is the moon just going behind a roof; our lamp goes out, and so we may hope for a little rest." He rose slowly from his brother's bed, like one who moves his limbs with difficulty, lovingly stroked the cheek of his silent listener, and said, "I cannot help it, child, but I wish I could have kept it to myself, for I know you always take my affairs more to heart than I do myself—it is that detestable habit of mine of telling you everything. There, it is not so bad after all; to-morrow we will rise reasonable and cured, or, if everything is not in order by that time, what says Father Kant in his beautiful treatise 'of the power of the mind to master by sheer resolution one's diseased feelings'?"

He stooped and touched the youth's pale brow with his lips, then he threw himself on his bed. A few chords still sounded from below, but they soon died away, and a quarter of an hour later the peaceful breathing from the opposite side of the room showed Balder that Edwin had at last fallen asleep. He himself lay for a long time open-eyed, looking at the cast of the slave on the stove, busy with thoughts which must for the present remain his secret.

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CHAPTER III.

We must now go back to what we have to tell of these brothers' previous life.

About thirty years before, their father had made the acquaintance of their mother when he was taking a country holiday, he being a young law student from Silesia, she the beautiful daughter of a small landed proprietor in Holstein, who certainly had far other plans for his favourite child than to give her to the first chance budding lawyer who had enjoyed a few days' hospitality in his house. And yet in the end he could do no otherwise. All who knew the maiden declared it to be an impossibility to withstand her calmly-expressed wish and will; such power did she possess over all minds, as much through her great beauty as through the gentle, undoubting nobility of her nature, which, in all that she said and did, always seemed to be right, almost with that prophetic insight into the intricacies of the world which is said to have been peculiar to the German prophetesses. It was difficult to discover what she saw in the insignificant-looking youth which made her resolve that she would have him and no other for her husband. But to the very end she had no reason to regret the steadfast firmness (which perhaps concealed in its depths somewhat of passion) with which she had put aside all

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hindrances to a speedy marriage. As she herself had not much more portion than her golden hair, which when unbound is said to have reached down to her knees, and as the young law student had still a long trial time to work through before he could hope to have a family hearth of his own, it would have fared ill with them if even one of them had considered him or herself too good for a subordinate position. Just at that time the post of auditor had become vacant in a great establishment in Berlin. When the young jurist applied for it, he heard on all sides that he was acting most unwisely in being untrue to his calling, and in shutting the door to all hope of higher advancement and dignity for the sake of this early and certain provision. He maintained that he knew very well what he was about, and as he had excellent testimonials, he was preferred to all the other competitors, and after a few months he brought his beautiful young wife to her home in the comfortable rooms provided for the auditor. Ambition is only a particular form of man's universal longing for happiness. He, who possesses his life's happiness in bodily form at his side, will easily renounce the shapeless dreams of his aspiring youth, particularly if, as it happened here, that, which the world in its pride looked down on as modest happiness, was enough to excite envy in the hearts of all who approached it nearly, and the apparent narrowness of the domestic horizon was not such as to stifle higher aspirations. This was, however, more particularly owing to the fair-haired wife. She was what one calls romantic, full of dissatisfaction at the dry, bald, strange, and yet prosaic reality of the things around her, of a longing to gild the greyness of this earthly existence out of the treasure of her own heart, and with her loving, enthusiastic imagination, and in the midst of the dull monotony of her domestic cares, to amuse herself with some playful fancy, which in spite of trouble or weariness kept her young and cheerful.

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She used to say that one ought to bear oneself as the birds do when they build their nests; they do not sweat as if they were day labourers, but as they fly backwards and forwards they sing, feast on a berry, or soar high into the sky, so that it seems as if they would hardly find their lowly bush again. This poetical inclination to build a brighter world over the sad, miserable reality sprang from a necessity in her nature which she neither paraded nor tried to conceal. It therefore retained the true charm of nature, and was for her more plainly-constituted husband a spring of constant youth. He never lost the enthusiasm of a lover, and even in the calm days of his married life he used to sit in his office over his accounts with the same impatience to hasten to his loved one that he had felt in the greenest time of his young love, when, as an ardent young law student, he had yearned for her.

Outwardly his circumstances did not improve; his sons grew up, and he could not hope for any advancement or increase of salary. But happiness increased all the same, and the fund of youth, love, and romance seemed to grow with the children. The mother, who bore the beautiful name of Nanna, would have nothing to do with a Fritz or a Carl for her first-born, but called him Edwin. The boy, however, on his side did not seem formed to become a part of his parent's beautiful poetical idyl. His appearance was not striking, he always remained a tall fellow with awkward limbs which seemed incapable of obedience, because their master in the upper story was thinking of anything rather than of the difficulty of moving his arms and legs properly. The mind of the boy was indeed turned to other things than the stories which his mother related to him, or the poetry with which she surrounded him. An inquiring, analyzing mind showed itself in him very early, and his mother, for the first time seriously vexed with her dear husband, declared that his hateful

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figures had entered into his son's blood and had affected his brain. For a long time she tormented herself with efforts to eradicate this inborn propensity, but she gave it up at last when the little boy went to school and brought home the most brilliant proofs of his progress. All the same she grieved over it silently, the more so as for nine years he was the only child. At last she brought a second into the world, a boy who promised to make up richly for the apparently sober and prosaic nature of the elder one. This little one was in everything a copy of his mother: was beautiful as the day, with thick golden hair; liked nothing better than to be put to sleep by fairy stories, to tend flowers, and to learn whole poems by heart. The mother seemed to grow young again in her beaming happiness over this lovely little creature, to whom she gave the name of Balder, the god of spring. Any one who saw her then could hardly believe she was the mother of her elder son, the long-legged schoolboy with the serious old face, so young and untried by life did she appear, herself like a flower, with her hair steeped in everlasting sunshine. But it was, alas, a season of joy brief as spring. Balder had not yet begun to distinguish between poetry and reality when his mother suddenly fell ill of a nervous fever, and after a few days, without having again recognized either husband or children, she was taken from them. It was a blow which quite crushed the unfortunate man, and brought him to a state of despair which made him almost stupid. But the event had a curious effect on the elder boy. At first he gave way to a wild, tempestuous grief such as no one would have expected from him, with his gruff, old-fashioned manner. Then only did it come out how passionately he had loved his mother, with a devotion indeed for which he had not been able to find words. Before the funeral it was impossible to persuade him to eat; he thrust from him with disgust all his favourite dishes, and a little milk before going to

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bed was all he could bring himself to taste. When he returned with his father from the churchyard, and saw the latter, himself pale as death, break down completely at the sight of all the signs of his cruelly-destroyed happiness, while the little Balder, with his dead mother's great eyes, gazed wistfully at his father, a deep change seemed to take place in the soul of the elder brother. His painfully-strained face grew suddenly calm, he pushed back his thin straight hair, went up to his father, and said to him—

"We must now see, father, how we can get on without my mother; you shall never be displeased with me again."

Then he seated himself on the floor near the little one, who was on a cushion, and began to play with him in his mother's way, to which, in spite of his affection for the child, he had not hitherto condescended. Balder stretched out his little hands to him, and chattered and laughed in his merry fashion.

Their father seemed to notice nothing of what went on around him; weeks and months passed before even outwardly he could return to his old groove. But that in itself was no great gain; that part of him which was a reckoning machine worked perfectly as before, the human part of him was irreparably destroyed. If Edwin had not managed the little house, helped somewhat by the old maid-servant, with a sense quite beyond his years, everything would have got into miserable confusion.

When, lastly, in the same year that their mother died, the little one had a fall and hurt his knee so grievously that from that moment he remained sickly, the last hope of seeing their father start afresh manfully was lost. It was now plain that he had only lived in the reflection which his beautiful wife had left behind in her bright-eyed boy. When those eyes were troubled he could not bear it. Without any special illness, he lay down, and never rose up again.

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A relation of their father's, a well-to-do official in Breslau, who already had a large family of his own, took the orphan boys to live with him; he had naturally only a moderate share of care and assistance to bestow on them. They were put to board in a schoolmaster's family, and were not worse off than hundreds of other fatherless and motherless children. Balder was least affected by the misfortune. He possessed a charm which gained all hearts, and his helpless delicacy did the rest. But people did not get on so easily with Edwin. A cool laconism and a certain roughness, added to the precocious superiority of his judgment, made him impracticable, and as he seemed to ask for no affection, people naturally did not see why they should force it on him; indeed among those to whom he owed any thanks there were none to whom he felt drawn. So his little brother continued to be the only object of his tender care, and it was touching to see how he devoted every free moment to him, carrying him about in his arms, spending all his little money for his pleasure, and preferring to lose part of his sleep, so as to give up his entire afternoon to the sickly child.

In this manner years went by. When Edwin went to the university, for in spite of his poverty and of his burning desire to stand upon his own feet, he could not make up his mind to learn a trade, Balder was eight years old. He had not been able to attend any school on account of the weakness of his health, for his knee required constant care, and he could not sit upon a bench for any length of time. But he was far more advanced than most boys of his age, for Edwin had been his instructor, and with the clearest, most far-sighted method had always directed his attention to the essential, and above all had sought to develop Balder's own powers. He succeeded most wonderfully, without rubbing off the bloom of the "schwärmerei" which the boy had inherited from his mother. His

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nature was a total contrast to that of his brother; in place of the severe logic by means of which Edwin made his way in the world of ideas, as a settler clears the primeval forest with an axe, Balder's mind rose as if on wings, and flying over all the heights that lay between, he would find himself without trouble and without fail at the goal which his brother had shown him in the distance.

So was it in everything, either philosophy or in anything that had to be solved, in knowledge of men and circumstances. That unfailing intuition, that clear-sighted power which we have noticed in his mother, appeared anew in him, and gave an irresistible, strangely lovely expression to the beautiful face (surrounded by its soft fair hair) which suffering had barely touched. Besides that, his goodness and unselfishness were boundless, which is very exceptional with chronic sufferers, who often end by making solicitude for their own person their sole interest, in fact a sort of pious duty. He was never heard to complain; not that this appeared to be a victory of resignation or heroism which he had gained over himself, it was rather a natural faculty of his soul to regard even his sufferings, his privations, as a possession which might prove a gain to him, this being the only speculation, and a most innocent one, which he had, so to say, developed in a masterly way.

At the time when we first make the acquaintance of the brothers they had lived together for about five years in the shoemaker's back house in the so-called "tub." Edwin had at first gone alone to Berlin, as in Breslau there was less facility for following exclusively the study of philosophy and natural science. In spite of his guardian's urgent entreaties, he could not make up his mind to take up any *brod studium*,* and his legal studies in Berlin were not much more than a pretence. When he thus found himself in direct

* A pursuit entered into merely for the sake of gaining a livelihood.

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opposition to the wishes of his benefactor, it seemed to him that it would be dishonourable to continue to eat his bread. Balder was, meantime, to remain where he was until Edwin had provided a home for him in Berlin.

This was not so easily done as they had hoped. Months passed before he could undertake any university teaching, for the private lessons which he had commenced to give absorbed his time and tried his temper. Then he had much trouble in starting his lectures, and when they were started he was no richer for them. The brothers wrote constantly to each other during this time, but at last he could bear it no longer, and one day at Whitsuntide he set off to put it to Balder whether on his honour he felt strong enough to share his poverty. Balder blushed up to the roots of his hair with joy at his brother's thus meeting his most secret wish; he would indeed have made the proposal long before if he had not feared to be a burden to Edwin. He now confessed that he had meantime taken secret measures not to be entirely dependent on his brother's help, which nevertheless he should hesitate less to accept than that of any one else. He had found the opportunity of learning to turn from a neighbour, and had indeed made so much progress that any master turner would have been glad to engage him as a workman. He bashfully showed Edwin a number of little articles for domestic use which he had fashioned for his guardian's wife and for the family where he lodged. "I see," said Edwin, smiling, "that I am following the most breadless of all pursuits, and that I should make a much better thing of it if I were to become my clever brother's partner. But only wait a little, my friend; my contribution to our preliminary expenses shall not long be wanting. The next time I am paid any money —just now I am coaching up a weak-minded young count for his degree—we will get the most beautiful turning lathe to be found in Berlin."

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CHAPTER IV.

THE great town had now begun its day's work, and it was a point of honour with the little house in the Dorotheen Strasse not to be behind its more distinguished neighbours in this respect. The inhabitants of the "tub" were not in the habit of sleeping late, and Balder never missed hearing what was the general alarum for the house, namely, the old pump-handle, which squeaked a well-meant but monotonous morning song, when Reginchen, in summer at six, in winter at seven, set it in motion in order to bring her father his glass of fresh water for breakfast. At the same time the windows of the workshop below were opened, and the grumbling of the foreman was to be heard, who profited by the half-hour before the master's appearance to make the apprentices feel his importance. No sooner, however, did the landlord himself in a loose jacket and slippers come sauntering across the yard than everything became as still as death. But there were still further means for keeping the brothers aware of how the hours went.

Exactly an hour after the first call from the pump, Reginchen used to appear with the clothes well brushed and the breakfast. Punctually at nine o'clock a window would be opened in the first floor opposite, and a yellow old face in a night-cap, belonging to the eminent actress of former times, would put forth a

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withered nose to see which way the wind blew, as her husband, the eminent tenor of former times, though he had no longer any high C to take care of, could not be untrue to his old habit of remaining at home in an east wind. Exactly an hour later the little man himself would appear at another window overlooking the court, where out of the glare of the sun he shaved himself with much ceremony, and with the help of a little looking-glass made use of all the means at his disposal to beautify himself, as would seem to be indispensable with those lords of the stage, or indeed an inalienable right of the aristocrats of this calling. On the stroke of eleven the piano was always opened below at Fräulein Christiane's, whose acquaintance we made casually in the first chapter, and a practised hand struck a few chords as a preliminary to a singing lesson, which, out of consideration for Edwin, was given at this hour when he was in the habit of going to his lecture. All kinds of scholars studied here; of late a gay little soubrette from a suburban theatre had come twice a week to practise her parts in new operettas, and with her various bad habits, musical and otherwise, had brought her earnest teacher to the verge of distraction. When the windows were open, every loud word was audible above, so that Balder was often a witness of curious scenes, which introduced him furtively into a completely strange world. In the middle the dinner-bell would suddenly ring, punctually at twelve, answered usually by the apprentice with a loudly whistled street tune, this being his only vent for his feelings of joy at the deliverance.

The regular machinery had to-day done its duty as usual, but the inhabitants of the upper story in the back house seemed deaf to it. The tune from the pump had been unheard. An hour later the gentle knock at the door received no answer, and after a little hesitation and a few shakes of the head, the slight, fair-haired spirit of the house hung the clothes

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over the banister and ran quickly downstairs again with the breakfast. Miezica, the white cat, who at the same moment showed herself at the window, expecting to be fed by Balder, set up her back on the broad ledge which ran from gutter to gutter, and remained in that position staring with astonished eyes into the room where nothing was moving.

Only when the yellow top of the acacia tree was touched by the sun—the old tenor was just beginning to powder himself, so it must have been ten minutes past ten—did Balder open his eyes in wonder at the bright light all around. He looked across at Edwin, who did not appear to find the sunshine an interruption to his dreams. The boy rose softly, and limped to the turning lathe in the corner, where he noiselessly arranged a variety of tools, pieces of wood, and little bottles. He, however, did not begin to work; he took a book, and for a while was absorbed in it, till suddenly the thoughts which had kept him awake so long in the night seemed to recur to him; he laid the book aside, opened the window, and leaned out into the air, which was already heated through.

It was not long before a modest knock at the door disturbed his reverie; he crept on tiptoe past the sleeper, opened the door with great care, and slipped out on to the dusky landing.

Outside stood Reginchen; her round face, where joy seemed always ready to peep from her eyes, and to quiver in the corners of her mouth, was turned towards him with a sort of inquisitive anxiety.

"Good morning, Reginchen," he whispered. "He is still asleep, so I cannot let you in; he only fell asleep long after midnight, and I am so glad that the sun does not wake him. You have already been to the door once in vain. I also—I don't often—we talked so late into the night. I am very sorry to give you so much trouble, Reginchen. Let me take the breakfast tray; I will carry it in."

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"Don't speak of trouble," answered the girl, who, when conversing with the brothers, always strove to soften as much as possible her native Berlin accent, without, however, always getting the better of the mysterious and fatal dative and accusative. "But you will be quite faint with hunger. Shall I not fetch you a little coffee? This cold milk, when you have eaten nothing——"

"Thank you, Reginchen, but I am accustomed to it. You are always so good and kind. But why are you so smart at this time in the morning, Reginchen?"

She blushed, and smoothed down her black silk apron and the folds of a clean muslin dress which was freshly washed and ironed.

"It is my birthday, Herr Walter" (she had never been able to manage the name Balder). "My mother gave me the apron, and the old court singer on the first floor gave me this garnet brooch. After dinner I am going to see my aunt in Schöneberg, and I wanted to know if I might bring you your dinner earlier—my brother is coming to fetch me exactly at one."

"Your birthday, Reginchen! and I could have forgotten it! Are you angry? It is my brother's illness which has given me so much to think of lately. You know, Reginchen, how heartily I wish you every happiness, though my congratulations do come limping so behindhand. You are accustomed to see me limp."

"How can you talk so, Herr Walter?" said she, letting him take her firm little hand, to which he gave a hearty shake. "What does it matter whether a stupid thing like me, without education or learning, should be seventeen or eighteen years old. My father says women remain children all their life long; it makes no difference whether they are older or younger."

"That is only in fun, Reginchen. What would he do, to say nothing of all the others in this house, without you? So you are really eighteen years old

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to-day! I wish I knew what you would like. I should like to give you something for your birthday."

"I don't want a present." She turned abruptly away and placed her foot on the upper step. "You have often given me things, at Christmas and other times, and mother scolds me, and says I am too old to receive presents from strange gentlemen. Hark! she is calling me. I must go, Herr Walter." She flew like lightning down the steep stairs, and Balder heard her singing a little song in her clear childlike voice as she clattered across the paved courtyard in her slippers.

He sighed involuntarily as he lifted the tray from the low step on which she had placed it. Then he limped softly back into the room.

He went up to his sleeping brother and looked at him with loving solicitude. Edwin seemed to be sleeping peacefully. His high, well-formed forehead was unknitted, there was a smile on the mouth, the delicate nostrils trembled slightly as they always did when he said anything witty. His shirt was open on his chest, a little gold locket tied to a ribbon was visible: it contained a lock of his mother's hair. Balder wore a similar one. He was just going to reseat himself in his corner by the window when a quick step rushed up the staircase, and before Balder could reach the door to waylay the new arrival, a lively knocking announced a visitor who knew himself to be welcome at any time.

"Come in," cried Edwin, still half asleep, as he raised himself slowly. "That must be Marquard. Good heavens! it is broad day."

"So seems it," said the visitor, laughing. "Is it for a miserable empiric like myself to come and point out to our philosopher the fact that the sun is already high in the heavens? Well, how is my patient? Has the cure worked? Why, I almost think the dose has been too strong!"

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He nodded in a friendly way to Balder, and then went quickly up to the bed, and, before feeling Edwin's pulse, touched his forehead and temples. His sharp light-grey eyes looked through a pair of gold spectacles at a heavy gold watch, and the round, youthful, but rather bloodless face, which on entering had worn an expression of cheerful self-satisfaction, changed now to one of calm attention, while the figure, which was gentlemanly and of middle size, leant lightly against the chair near the bed.

"My dear doctor," said Edwin, "behold your masterpiece in me. Mother Nature, who certainly has reason to be afraid of you, since, without the slightest respect, you burrow in her depths and put all her little failings under the microscope, seems in obedience to you to have taken pity on me, and to have sent me sleep. The rest will follow now; at all events, I have the appetite of a wolf. If you will excuse me, I will only dress provisionally, and get to breakfast at once, if only to set Balder free, who I see has again waited for me."

"Probatum est," laughed the doctor, as he put his watch into his pocket. "I knew very well that for brains such as yours there would be no better narcotic than the mixture of noise, folly, and tricots, which we men of the world sip as a stimulant. I find all the symptoms much more satisfactory than yesterday, and in a few days shall probably repeat the dose. Hunger is also a good sign, but I don't see the breakfast yet."

"It is there on the table," said Balder, quietly.

The doctor walked up to the little table, which, covered with a green cloth, stood in the centre of the room, and cast a glance of indescribable pity and horror into the white pot which stood between two earthenware cups, while in a basket at the side lay two little rolls.

"Forgive me," said he, "but my knowledge is

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not sufficient to enable my eyes to determine the nature of this decoction which it seems is to form your first meal."

"It is pure, unadulterated milk in which we steep the purest of wheaten bread," said Edwin, who in the mean time had thrown on his clothes, and who now came to the table, and poured out two cups of milk. "It must be well known to you, friend, that milk contains all the necessary ingredients for nourishment which——"

"Which an infant requires till it gets its teeth, and is sufficiently prepared for its human destiny of preying on the lower animals. Holy reason! what is the world coming to, when thy professed worshippers, the philosophers, shamelessly follow habits and customs contrary to the commonest sense? Are you not afraid of the glaring inconsistency of subsisting upon the nourishment suited to a stupid nation of shepherds, you who are living in the midst of our destructive, enervating civilization which exhausts blood and marrow? Particularly in Berlin, where it is notorious that the cows are all touched with the pallor of Hegel's philosophy, and where each pump is made to supply any deficiency in natural wateriness. No, my boy, either I give you up as incurable, or you make up your mind on the spot to try a thoroughly different system. Wash your face with this innocuous liquid, an excellent thing to prevent early wrinkles, and moisten your inward man with a glass of port wine at this time, together with half a pound of roast meat according to circumstances. I wager that then in a very short space such a revolution will take place in your constitution that it will become rather a danger than otherwise for you to visit the ballet too often. What is there to laugh at? I am speaking quite seriously."

"That is why I laugh," said Edwin, while he crumbled the roll into the blue milk as he stood at

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the table. "You forget that I can only use prescriptions made up at the sign of 'The Fortunate Beggars,' or have you got it in your pocket?"

"What?"

"My professorship, or Balder's diploma as court turner. With your practice among the influential circles you cannot fail, if you take it up seriously, to open a *carrière* for us. Till then I regret to say that I see no prospect of trying your change of systems."

Marquard looked round the room, shook his head with vexation, and said:

"But it is perfect suicide, the most criminal folly, the way in which you are living. Neither can Balder be any better if you go on crouching together here like a pair of old women, and fasting yourselves into a consumption. Professorship! Madness! You will never get one with your opinions in our Christian country of Germany. If only you had learnt something sensible, so that you could have made yourself of use in other ways. However, I suppose you are pretty good at arithmetic?"

"Well, I dare say I can manage the four first rules, and perhaps even the rule of three."

"Don't make jokes. You are a ready mathematician. Well, I will get you into a life assurance company where they need an actuary. Salary, five hundred thalers to begin with. You need only say one word."

"Rather three than one, my faithful Eckard. I thank you. I cannot bear the atmosphere of an office. But, seriously, do not give yourself any trouble with me; it would be thrown away. Every German, as such, must be allowed one whim; mine is, to belong to myself, to shake from the tree of life as many nuts as I please, and to waste as much time as I can spare in cracking them. To make a *carrière* for oneself wastes a great deal of time, and it is much the same

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with becoming a millionnaire in a respectable way. I must therefore renounce both; and as I have neither talent nor inclination for either, and in the mean time am getting on as I am, why should I excite myself because the cows in Berlin have deteriorated in the fabrication of milk somewhat to the same extent as the Prussian state philosophy since Father Kant's time? If only an Epicurean such as you does not excite unnatural longings in us, we have all we want in our 'tub,' and even a little over for a good day now and then. Is it not so, Balder?"

The doctor was on the point of saying something else, but he swallowed it down and seized his hat.

"Good-bye," he grumbled, and went towards the door, but on the threshold he stopped. "You will allow me," he said gruffly, "as you are still in my hands, to send you some medicine from my dispensary. A wine merchant, on whom I effected a most striking cure, has presented me with some very decent claret. I shall send you a sample, and if you don't drink half a bottle every morning,—Balder can join in a glass,—I——"

"You will put an end to our acquaintance? I hope not. It would be a pity: for you, because without us you would become a mere empiric and gourmand, and for us, because we should then lose our last luxury of having a doctor to consult. No, old fellow, I thank you very much for your humane intention, but it will be wiser for us to cut our coat according to our cloth."

"And these men pretend to be superior to common prejudices," cried the doctor vehemently, as he put on his hat. "If you really were you would not be too proud to accept a wretched drop of wine from an old college friend. You are regular fools with your idealisms."

"And you are in a fair way to be just as eminent a doctor as old Heim. His rudeness you have got already," laughed Edwin.

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The doctor did not hear; he had banged the door, and rushed downstairs.

Balder looked at his brother.

"You should not have refused," said he, "he means it so kindly; and indeed he is right, our diet is not fit for you."

"Now don't you begin to scold," replied Edwin, drinking the rest of his milk as if he were sipping the choicest nectar. "My mood to-day is such that not even the last trumpet could disturb my peace of mind; just that phlegmatic, sensitive, super-sensitive frame of mind in which the most difficult problems become mere child's play. It is a pity that I should have nothing harder to solve than how it happens that in a dream a crazy fellow can say such wise things, and yet on awaking find himself as mad as before."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, of course I dreamt of my last night's acquaintance. You remember—La Belle Chocoladière? I was aware, Heaven knows how, that she was the daughter of a Polish countess and of a French *valet de chambre*, a creature totally ignorant, vain, and not particularly virtuous. As she laughed at my doubtful French, I began with great calmness to explain to her that she ought to be very thankful to any reasonable man for having anything to do with her. Then I spoke much and impressively about the dignity of man in general, and of the philosopher in particular, something like Wieland's Langbärte, and she, after making a face as if she were sorry for all her weaknesses and misdoings, suddenly burst out laughing, and danced round the room in the style of the solo dancer we saw yesterday—warbled French songs which were not of the most proper description, and behaved altogether so extravagantly that at last I said to her face: I should consider myself the most contemptible weak fool on the face of the earth if I were to allow my head to be turned one minute longer by your little

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nose and black eyelashes. Then she became quite mischievous; I still colder and bitterer, she more and more bacchante like, and I was just on the point of springing through a low window into a large and beautiful garden to escape from her caressing hands, with which she attempted by force to smooth the angry wrinkle from my brow, when I suddenly woke, and found that in spite of all this wisdom in my dream, I was not one whit less foolish than when I went to bed.

"But do not take the thing so very much to heart, my child," he continued, as Balder remained silent; "I can assure you it is no very great misfortune, no hopeless passion. I am quite convinced that I shall never see her again, and I do not know how long I shall continue incapable of thinking of anything else. But it is the pleasantest feeling, this gentle burning, this blissful defencelessness, this state when one's thoughts are turned inward and yet at the same time to life out of oneself, this contradiction between the inherent and the transcendent, which is the real mystery of existence, and of which we seldom become conscious in our life of respectable sound common sense. You will come to it some day, child, and then for the first time understand what I mean. The head has nothing to do with all this, the intellectual mill is at rest, there is no more corn to grind; quite new nerve centres seem to have taken the direction of affairs, and when I have overcome the unwontedness of the state, it will be a very interesting psychological study to——"

The door was thrown open, and a fresh visitor interrupted our philosopher's attempt to make a virtue of necessity by employing the pain at his heart usefully in the cause of science.

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CHAPTER V.

THE new-comer was a tall and uncommonly broad-shouldered young man, who carried a plaid and knapsack over his shoulder. Without ceremony he threw on to Balder's bed a small, faded brown felt hat, smiled as if unwillingly, nodded hastily, and exclaimed "Good morning" to the two brothers. The first impression made by the pale, deeply-scarred face, with its somewhat crooked mouth, was hardly favourable. A constant look of sarcastic reserve and malice drew up the firm lips, and the teeth, which were very visible when he spoke, increased the expression of fierceness and hostility. But when the face was at rest there was in the eyes a look of intellectual melancholy which overpowered all that was less noble in the face, and the brow beneath the short bristling hair was well formed as if by serious brain-work. His movements were impetuous and unsteady, his whole get-up that of a man who thinks very little of his personal appearance, though very little care would have been sufficient to make the splendid figure look really well.

"Hullo! Mohr! Heinrich Mohr! What wind blows you to us?" cried Edwin, hastening towards him, and shaking him heartily by the hand.

"Probably the same senseless whirlwind which sweeps all human sweepings hither and thither, pell

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mell," answered the other. "It is only individuals who possess a certain specific gravity who do not change their place without particular reason. You, for example, I find here, between the old four walls, exactly as I left you, three years ago. And if I am to be quite honest, the only sensible reason why I have ventured out of my modest little natal nest into this great clever lunatic asylum of Berlin, was the wish to see you again. You have still the most human faces of all my acquaintance, and the fact of your actually seeming to feel a sort of pleasure at being again burdened with me shows that you are just as you used to be."

"Yes, and indeed you seem just as you used to be, more so than is perhaps advisable," said Edwin, laughing.

Mohr only answered with a shrug of the shoulders; he threw off his leather knapsack, and went up to the turning lathe, against which Balder was leaning.

"Still struggling conscientiously to ruin yourself!" he muttered, taking up a few of the little things which were awaiting the last touch. "But I can't blame you, Balder. At all events you do something each day, and are only ruining your chest with bending and stooping. Any other but you, after sitting the whole day and turning these little wares, would feel inclined to jump out of his skin. You seem to have made some progress; you are much to be envied, Balder."

The youth looked up with a smile.

"If only you could convince Edwin of the fact!" said he; "he is always at me to give up my trade. He never will believe me that it would kill me much sooner to sit quite idle and see everybody else work."

"Idle! as if you could be idle!" exclaimed Edwin, impetuously. "It is only foolish obstinacy which will not allow you to accept from your only brother the miserable bit of bread which he can well afford

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to give you. However, don't let us talk of it; it is the only real trouble of my life, and this stony-hearted one could easily save me from it. Confound it! I will *not* be angry to-day. So fire away, friend, with your confession; you need not fear any moralizing from me to-day."

Mohr had seated himself on the chair by the open window, and taking out a small tin box, began twisting a cigarette.

"There is nothing new to tell," said he, with apparent equanimity. "The old experience, that no one can add an inch to his stature, has been confirmed, that is all. I left Berlin, as you will remember, because I thought it was only the noise and the confusion here which hindered me from becoming a great man. 'Talents are nurtured best in solitude.' Well, solitude enough I had at my old mother's, but yet no talent has been nurtured. So then I thought, if nothing is to come of the talents, we will see what can be done with the character. 'But character on life's tempestuous sea.' And so here I am again, and I have already chosen the character which is to be mine. A match, Edwin!" He blew great clouds of a strong Turkish tobacco out of the window.

"Then did nothing come of the editorship of the paper from which you hoped so much?"

"A miserable affair, my friend, a regular common low sheet of gossip; twice a week bad novels (merely audacious imitations), or 'original articles' contributed by the daughter of the Mayor or the son of the head custom-house officer, and at the end rubbish in the shape of charades and riddles. At the same time all the people in the town swore by it, and not one syllable fell to the ground. A fellow good for anything would have made something out of it, would in time have smuggled in something better, while he improved himself; but that is the very point. After having begun by making faces at all these Philistinisms,

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I at last found that I was myself incapable of anything much better. You know it was always my opinion that if only I could come to myself, which was impossible here in this nest of intellectual ants in Berlin, I should astonish the world. Pshaw! I have come to myself, and find myself quite unbearable. Heaven be praised, my taste is too good for that."

"Still the same old Mohr, who, instead of making the best of himself, loves to blacken himself."

"Let me finish, and pray do not think that I make myself out bad in order that you should afterwards praise me. Bad I am not exactly; I am a tolerably decent fellow, neither stupid nor dull, with a few pretty attainments, and endowed with what is certainly no ordinary judgment—N.B. in that which others do. If I were a rogue I would open a critic shop, and sell myself to the highest bidder. But the misfortune is that I have, or rather had, the ambition to be something myself, and the worst of it is that I really have such a variety of talents. I had the most decided parts out of which to make an indifferent poet or musician, and no one can beat me in political leading articles, which sound very grand, and say nothing. You may say there are many such men. True, but not many who are so honestly and piously jealous of the really clever fellows who really can do something; not many who feel such disgust at all bungling, such misery when they suddenly find that they themselves are bunglers. It was this which drove me away from you. I could not stand seeing you all, each in his field, digging with might and main, and at last, were it little or much, reaping good corn, while I gathered in nothing but tares. I should have liked to spit in my face when I thought of my mediocrity in everything, that is to say, in everything that could be called doing or succeeding in any work, while I can argue like a hero. Now at last I have discovered *that this is just my fate.* I am only a half-man, begot when

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mother Nature was cross-grained, and condemned always to do things by halves. But I will spoil her sport, and be complete at all events in one thing, in that I will be a virtuoso."

"I can't make out why this did not occur to you long ago," interrupted Edwin. "You are born to be a critic, and as such can influence the world and posterity as much as if you were a poet."

"I should be a fool for my pains," cried the other, and threw his cigarette into the yard, while, getting up, he rubbed the back of his head with his large hands. "To set myself to improve the world, to put before it rough truths in black and white, which naturally each individual will feel concern only his worthy neighbour, to attempt to educate creative artists who imagine that thinking blunts the imagination, or perhaps to tell truths to writers who probably understand reading even less than writing; no, Edwin, *vestigia terrent.* A certain Lessing tried this a hundred years ago, and broke his teeth over the hard wood. All these philanthropic, self-sacrificing deeds did not make the world one whit happier, and only made the doers of them miserable. No, the only thing which remains as a calling for such a superfluous being as myself is *pure envy.* I have already made pretty fair progress, and, as I say, I hope to carry it to perfection."

"Well, I must allow," laughed Edwin, "that this is a completely new road to happiness."

"Do not laugh, philosopher," grumbled Mohr emphatically. "Don't you see that in this miserable world, which on every side is imperfect and incomplete, each one must try and do what he can for his own small individuality. The really gifted ones have a superfluity, which they share with others, helping them to patch their poverty, and perhaps even to complete themselves. I, for my part, can only be satisfied if I fervently envy all that is great and complete, that

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has, in fact, a superfluity. Thereby I am, as it were, akin to it; for how could I envy it if I did not know it, feel, taste, and deserve to possess it? Only qualities which have a certain similarity attract each other. And if I, who am so alive to my own insufficiency, spend a whole morning over a Shakespeare, a Goethe, a Mozart, envying them from my heart, have I not fulfilled my object in life better than if the same time had been filled up with manufacturing a bad tragedy, miserable love songs, or a middling sonata?"

He walked to the window and gazed up at the acacia tree.

"You are right," said Balder, in his clear voice; "only you should not call that jealousy which is really love and veneration and the most beautiful and unselfish enthusiasm."

"Balder has hit the right nail on the head, as he always does," cried Edwin.

Mohr turned round, and the brothers remarked a moisture in his eyes which he was trying to conceal.

"It would be very nice if it were so," said he, "but that is only the bright side of my life as virtuoso; it has also a shadow, and a broader one than I at all like. I can see nothing which is complete and in harmony with itself without envy; no self-satisfied stupidity, no open-mouthed falseness, no Philistine faces, to whom the devil of envy does not urge me to burst out with impertinent speeches, pointing out their pitifulness to these worthies, who really have no right to their happiness. In this way I brought all my fellow-townsmen about my ears, and wherever I go I shall in time be cried down like a mad dog, avoided and hunted. My blood boils when I see rogues succeeding everywhere, while the truly worthy, who do not use their elbows, remain behind. You, for example—if it depended on me you would be driving in your own coach, and taking it easy, as beseems nature's aristocrats. Instead of which, that insigni-

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ficant fellow Marquard, whom I met below, has a splendid carriage, and nods graciously to me as he drives by, after regarding me *de haut en bas* through his gold spectacles. Hell and devils! he who can see that without going mad——"

"Don't abuse our doctor," said Edwin. "In spite of everything he is a good fellow, and his carriage dignity suits Balder's and my trade as little as my scientific method can keep pace with his empirical galop. Besides——"

At this moment the first bar of Gluck's overture to Orpheus sounded from below.

Mohr again approached the window, and listened attentively.

"Who is that playing?" said he softly, after a while.

"Our neighbour, a single lady of whom we know very little, except that she gives music lessons. Last night—oh, I did not tell you about it, Balder—I found her absorbed in Schopenhauer's 'Parerga.' She spoke with enthusiasm of his chapter on the sufferings of the world."

"One can hear in her playing that she has herself studied in this department," said Mohr. "Women only play like that when their heart has been broken and mended again. It is the same with old fiddles, which must go to pieces once or twice before they can give forth the right tone. But listen; it is more and more beautiful."

He seated himself on the window-seat, and listened with absorbed forgetfulness of everything else. Balder set to work noiselessly at his little boxes, Edwin took a book and stared immovably at one page. It was so quiet in the room that in the pauses of the music the cat could be distinctly heard, who had crept into the room, and was making free with the remains of the breakfast.

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CHAPTER VI.

At the same time that this was passing in the back house, the landlord in the front shop was engaged in conversation with a customer who had brought him, carefully enveloped in a newspaper, a pair of worked slippers to mend. It was unusual not to find the master at this time in the workshop. But it was, as the reader will remember, an unusual day, Reginchen's birthday, and her mother, who was, as a rule, supreme in the shop, had to-day resigned it to her husband in order to superintend herself the dough for the customary birthday cake, which she would not have neglected for the world, though there was a confectioner at the very first corner. Reginchen had had since her fourth year a special partiality for a particular kind of home-made open plum tart, and though she could seldom satisfy her mother with anything she did, and had to submit to ceaseless lectures, yet, as she very well knew, she was the apple of her eye, for whom the worthy woman would have gone through fire and water. So, in spite of the heat of the day, Madame Feyertag stood at the fire without grumbling, and did not concern herself about what was usually her chief care, and because of which she seldom allowed her husband to show himself in the shop; namely, the

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jealous fear lest female customers should call, and lest the master as he took their measure should find other feet prettier than the beslippered* ones of his faithful Frau Meisterin.

The good man, though in the days of his apprenticeship he had doubtless been a wild fellow, had certainly given no pretext for such suspicions during the three and twenty years of his peaceful married life. And yet, during the last few months a change had come over him which had not escaped the sharp eyes of his wife; not that his doings or habits were in any way altered; no, his matter-of-fact life was spent much as usual, and he did not seem to rebel against the above-mentioned slippers, but the change was in his conversation. She was quite accustomed to his constant allusions to progress, and abuse of all slavery, especially domestic slavery, and was glad to allow him this innocent pleasure as long as everything else followed its ordinary peaceful course. But for the last three months the tone of his revolutionary table-talk was changed, and it was always directed against "the women," of whom he said the most malicious things, frequently expressed by the most wonderfully strange words. It would have been well if he had only caught up these scornful sayings in the liberal association to which indeed he owed all his progressive education. But except on special solemn occasions, women were excluded from its meetings, and on fête days the tone was always eminently respectable, to say nothing of the obligatory toast to the fair sex. He now always spoke of "females" and of the sex with a contempt to which Madame Feyertag's person and behaviour had certainly never given any occasion; what then more probable than that the master had added to his knowledge of women in other circles, and, perhaps seduced by an acquaintance in the shop, had approached more nearly to the lighter-footed sex than was compatible

* Slipper government, *i. e.* petticoat government.

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with domestic peace. Since then Madame Feyertag had kept a sharp look-out on the secret sinner, would no longer suffer him in the shop, and had forbidden, at all events in Reginchen's presence, the use of the offending expressions. The good man made up for this constraint by talking all the more freely to others, and the very morning when by chance we find him in the shop, he was in the full enjoyment of giving vent to his feelings. His auditor received this torrent of loquacity with some surprise. He was a little old gentleman with shy and yet lively manners, and his delicate, regularly-formed face wore such an expression of winning benignity that it must have struck even a chance observer—one of those faces the delicacy of whose skin is such that they wither early, and yet never become really old. In vain did a little grey moustache do its best to give a martial turn to the innocent, childlike face; it had no more success than the bald forehead had to make its owner appear a deep thinker. But there were occasions when the soft little eyes had a fire of their own, and when the whole face was lighted up so that one could not but respect it. The little man wore a well-brushed but rather shabby coat, which had been in fashion ten years before, a large black cravat in which there was a pin containing the miniature of a woman. He had placed an old-fashioned grey hat, which was partly covered with a piece of crape, on the counter, and, leaning on a little stick, was sitting opposite to the shoemaker, who had just finished the examination of the slippers, which he announced could be mended once more, though at the expense of some of the embroidery.

"Spare them as much as possible, dear Mr. Feyertag," begged the little gentleman. "They were my dear wife's last birthday present to me; she worked them herself. I have worn them constantly for the last five years, but I tread so softly that I do not wear

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out many shoes. I am certainly your worst customer,'' added he, with a smile of apology.

"Oh no, Herr König," replied the shoemaker; "it is always a pleasure and an honour to work for you and your worthy family, if it were only for the high instep which belongs to your family; but you are besides an artist, and have an eye for form. As regards durability, that is not your fault, it lies with the leather; and then when your young lady begins to go to balls that will all be different. Then the strongest work helps little, Herr König; dancing shoes which are not flimsy like poppy-heads, fit to blow away, are no honour to the best shoemaker."

The little gentleman shook his head thoughtfully.

"I am afraid you will sell but few of such articles to my daughter, Mr. Feyertag. She will hear nothing of such innocent pleasures, though I would gladly procure them for her; never anything but her work and her father. I can do nothing with her."

"Come, come," said the landlord, as he drew a little snuff-box out of his pocket in order to offer it to the painter, "that won't last. I know very well that Fräulein was always different to others, and that she has never been able to forget her mamma; but women are women, Herr König, and there is no virtue in youth. Ah! I see you still wear crape on your hat, so perhaps it is in the blood; but it will not last. The will, Herr König, is supreme, the perception is weak—so weak that very often one has no perception whatever."

"You are wrong," replied the other, looking at the ground with a quiet thoughtfulness. "She is quite cheerful again, and so am I, though I miss my dear wife all day long. God will not have people always hanging their heads; He has made the world much too beautiful for that. Well! yes, I have kept the crape on my hat. Why should I take it off?—and when? It would be very strange if I could say to myself on a particular day, Now it shall no longer be

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with me as it was yesterday; I will now put aside all signs of remembrance. Should I thereby wash out all remembrance? But even if her mother had lived I do not think our child would have been very different. She has a very peculiar character."

"I hope you will kindly allow me to contradict you there," said Mr. Feyertag with great decision, in spite of the studied politeness of his words. "Females, as females, have in general no peculiar character, only the character of their species. For their only destination, the only thing for which they are created, is the propagation of the species, as Salvenia says; a woman who wishes to do anything else is not quite right. Of course I do not allude to your daughter."

The painter opened his eyes as wide as he could.

"What extraordinary things are you saying, dear Mr. Feyertag?" he asked, with perfect simplicity. "Is not a woman as much one of God's creatures as we are, as much created in His image and gifted with soul and intellect?"

The shoemaker laughed to himself with an air of superiority.

"Do not take it ill of me, Herr König," said he, "but this view of the matter is quite old-fashioned. Have you never heard of the great philosopher Schopenhauer? He cuts one up pretty sharply; he shows you as clearly as that two and two make four, how much there is in the so-called 'mancipation of women."

"I read very little," answered the painter, "but the little that you have told me makes me feel no curiosity to make the acquaintance of a writer who thinks so badly of the noblest and most amiable half of humanity. I would rather keep to my Schiller, who says, 'Honour the women!'"

"They plait, and they weave," broke in the shoemaker. "Well! that they may continue to do, they are very useful employments. But to meddle in

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masculine business, this badly-grown, small-shouldered, broad-hipped, short-legged sex; no, no, Herr König, we must not let them get the upper hand. Propagation, nothing more; but as regards *propaganda*, all that is liberal and progressive, that is *our* affair. Look at my wife, for instance, the best woman in the world! But if I did not every now and then show her who is master, where should I be? I allow that the last few years I have simply from laziness allowed her to take the lead much more than I ought to have done. But Schopenhauer has made me ashamed of myself. Now, when she chooses to mistake her social position, and 'mancipates herself too much, I say, 'Be quiet, Guste. You were once one of nature's flash in the pans, but now there is no more flashing to be looked for.' Then she abuses my foolish talking, as she calls it, but she dares not argue any more, because she does not exactly know what I mean, and that it is all written in Schopenhauer. Ha! ha! ha!"

He sniggered with delight, and rubbed his large hands.

"How did you get hold of this mischievous book?" asked the painter.

"Oh, quite simply. There lives in my back house a very learned gentleman, philosopher by profession, and very shortly to be made professor of philosophy. Once when he was out a boy came from the book-binder, and left a whole pile of newly-bound books in my shop, which I was to hand over to the Herr Doctor. It was after dinner, when I have a habit of nodding a little, and half asleep I took up the topmost book without exactly thinking what I was about, and began to read just where it opened. Potz Wetter! how suddenly my eyes were opened! 'On women' was the title of the chapter. I could not put it down till I had finished the last line. I can tell you, Herr König, that old King Solomon, who himself knew something of women and species and

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propagation, might have gone to school to this Schopenhauer."

"The author's name is Schopenhauer, and you call him a philosopher because he brings up all the old commonplaces about the other sex?"

The eyes of the little painter sparkled as he spoke, and he seized his hat, as if in a hurry to leave the shop.

"He *is* a philosopher, the Herr Doctor says so himself; and not only because of what he has written on women; he has written another great thick book which the Herr Doctor showed me, but he says it would be much too difficult for me—all about the will and perception. If you would like to read it, he will gladly lend it to you."

"Thank you, but I certainly do not wish to make the acquaintance of a gentleman who has such opinions, and who tries to spread them."

"The doctor, Herr König! Oh, there you are on a wrong tack. He does not at all agree with the essay on women, and says it contains as much falsehood as truth; but he is a bachelor, Herr König, so what can he know of such questions? Besides, he has very little to do with females, he lives alone with his invalid brother. It is almost like a monastery, Herr König. My Guste always says it would be difficult to find two such respectable young gentlemen in all Berlin if one was to advertise in the newspaper and offer a reward of a hundred thalers."

"Really! And so very learned, do you say?"

"Only the elder one, the doctor; but as for him, it is something stupendous, though he has next to nothing, because he belongs to the university, and you know that the minister of education wishes to starve out the whole university, in order to be able to fill up all the places with clergymen; there is but one opinion on the subject in our club. So our young doctor gives private lessons, his brother sells a few

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articles which he turns, and in this manner they live and pay their rent punctually, together with the extras for cooking and washing. Two young men, Herr König, of quite fabulous morality!"

The painter had again laid down his hat, and seemed to be struggling with a resolve.

"Do you know what, Herr Feyertag," said he at last; "after all I really should like to know your doctor. If it really is as you say, he will be just the man for whom I have been searching this long time past. My daughter complains that she cannot get on with her education alone. What she does know she learned from her mother. But since her death she has been forced to make herself useful in the house, and I thought if I got books for her that her clever head would do the rest. But it seems she cannot get on without proper instruction, and she is too far advanced and clever to be satisfied with anybody; indeed a teacher, a lady who had given lessons in high families, declared, after talking with Lea, that she could teach her nothing. So, if your doctor is really such a phœnix, and is, besides, a good man——"

"If by 'phœnix' you mean the fire insurance, why, one cannot be answerable for young people; but I will answer for his goodness, and you must find out the rest for yourself, if you are really in earnest about your daughter; but that is not my concern. My Reginchen can read and write, and has learnt hortography, and that is quite enough of things that have nothing to do with propagation. However, every one has his maximum, and if you wish it, Herr König, you can make acquaintance with the Herr Doctor now. It is holiday time, and most of his private pupils are away."

"I suppose," said the painter shyly, as he put on his hat and followed the shoemaker on to the landing, "that the terms will not be exorbitant?"

"You need have no fear of that," answered the

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shoemaker, shutting the shop-door. "If the doctor were paid as he deserves, he would be able to buy the finest house under the Linden, and would no longer need to mount my old back stairs. But he prefers to empty his pocket more than to fill it, that is his maximum. Here to the left, and then across the yard, Herr König."

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CHAPTER VII.

MEANTIME the brothers were at last alone again. As soon as ever the music had ceased below, Mohr had taken his hat.

"It is one of my favourite occupations to envy this very Gluck," he muttered, with compressed under lip. "I pity you that you can listen to him so calmly, without going wild with delight and rage. I have tried to express the mood in a rather funny composition, which, however, I flatter myself is not quite without point, and which I call my *Sinfonia ironica.* As soon as ever I have a lodging, and something in the shape of a piano, I will play it to you, and will also read you my new comedy, 'I am myself, and will stake myself.'"

"Too much pleasure at once, Heinz," said Edwin.

"You need not be afraid of the length of this *concert spirituel.* Of the symphony there are only two movements finished, of the comedy only an act and a half. Men like myself can never do anything but by halves."

"Fortunately it is well known that the half is more than the whole."

"You shall give me a lecture on that before very long, philosopher; good-bye!"

He went to seek a lodging in the neighbourhood. His mother, a well-to-do widow, seemed to have pro-

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vided for him sufficiently to enable him to get on for a while without working. At the door of the pianoforte player he remained standing, and read on the little china plate, 'Christiane Falk—teacher of music.' Within all was still. He would gladly have found a pretext for ringing, and making her acquaintance; but as nothing occurred to him, he was obliged to postpone it for a better opportunity.

Balder had begun to work again; he was rapidly finishing a pretty little box in olive wood, which was to contain all sorts of little sewing implements.

Meanwhile Edwin was performing his toilet; his usual way of doing this was to hang a small looking-glass to a nail on one of the shelves, exactly under 'Kant's Criticism of Pure Reason' and 'Fichte's Philosophy,' and while he thoughtfully passed a toothless comb through his hair and beard, he would look less in the glass than across at Balder. But to-day he did a great deal more; with a pair of scissors he cropped his hair on the temples and chin, and even looked most carefully to see whether the sides matched.

"I find," said he, "that intercourse with the ballet is very demoralizing. I am already beginning to be vain. I have hitherto been well satisfied with my honest face, and now I suddenly begin to see a variety of faults in it. We might have shared our mother's beauty more fairly; though, perhaps, after all, it is better that the inheritance should remain with one, rather than be dissipated by division. Now give me your opinion as an artist, my boy, whether the plantation has been improved by thinning."

"I should have spared the beard," said Balder; "it suited you well."

"You don't understand it, child. It was much too long, even for a philosopher; and though, as in 'Julius Cæsar,' no one should go about 'on a labouring day without a sign of his profession,' it is now holiday

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time, and I wish to go out to-day as a mere man, without frightening children and young ladies. I say, you really should make up your mind to go too. We will take a droschke, put up at Kranzler's, and you shall enjoy an ice as I did yesterday."

"To-day, Edwin? To-day—oh, please, I am not so very well, and it would be better another time." He bent blushing over his work.

At this moment there was a knock, and the round, good-humouredly sly face of the landlord appeared in the doorway, for the little painter had particularly insisted on giving him precedence. In the half comically confidential, half respectful manner which he always assumed in his intercourse with the brothers, he presented Herr König to them as an artist, and the father of a highly-educated daughter, who nevertheless wished to complete her education. The little gentleman had immediately on his entrance totally lost himself in contemplation of the engravings and busts, and seemed quite to have forgotten the object of his visit. Only when the landlord ceased speaking, and Edwin smiled as he looked at Balder, did he recollect himself and modestly repeat his request.

"My dear sir," answered Edwin, "indeed I feel myself much honoured, but I really do not know that I am the man you require. I am not a particularly good teacher, for I am absolutely without the ambition of a pedagogue. Every pupil is of equal value to the true teacher, who only feels the more impelled to make something out of the idle, hard-headed scholar with little talent. I, on the contrary, have too much to do with myself to be able to help others who are without the stuff to profit by my help. I can show the way, but the scholar must walk for himself. And now look at our young ladies—with all respect for your daughter, Herr König—how can these poor things advance far on their own feet, even if we do smooth their path and hold up the goal before them, when in their earliest

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years they are carefully taught to fear each firm and vigorous step as unwomanly? They trip, dance, hop, and fly with a variety of wings over the green meadow of youth, and then when they reach the high road of serious life, they lean on their husband's arm, and expect to be lifted and carried by him. Pray forgive these uncivil remarks. I have had experiences, and do not see why I should keep them to myself. But as I do happen to have some spare time just now, and if you are willing to trust to the recommendation of our landlord, I will try whether you are not mistaken in me."

He took his straw hat, and said softly to Balder—

"Please don't wait dinner for me to-day. Very probably I may take a stroll away from the streets after I have made acquaintance with this knowledge-loving 'Königstöchterlein.'"*

He passed his hand over his brother's hair as a farewell, and accompanied the two men downstairs. When he was alone in the hot street with the little painter, the latter said—

"You will not have very far to go, Herr Doctor. I live on the Schiffbauerdamm, and we shall have shade all the way. But in order that you should understand the peculiarity of my daughter's bringing up, allow me to say a few words to you about my domestic circumstances. Your landlord told you my name; you scarcely will have heard it before. My pictures cannot exactly be called striking productions, and of late years I have turned most of my attention to wood engraving. There is more security, Herr Doctor, in a handicraft than in art, though perhaps not a golden one; but the father of a family, even when the family only consists of two— Besides, I have not quite given up painting; I have a peculiar though very modest genre of my own, from which indeed I have gained a nickname among artists. Just

* King's daughter. The painter's name is König, *i. e.* King.

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as there is a Katzen-Rafael, a Sammel-Breughel, a Höllen-Breughel, I am called the Zaunkönig* from my predilection for introducing old hedges into my landscapes. Predilection," added he, with a smile, "that is perhaps hardly the word. God knows I would rather paint splendid forests like Ruysdael, or clear solemn skies like Claude Lorraine, if my talent reached so high. My style is always small and minute. A little plot of ground, with stones, plants, and brambles, where mother Nature's works develop as cheerily as if it were a world in itself, in short, what is called 'foreground,' has always given me so much to do, especially as I am short-sighted, that I have never got as far as the real landscape. Well, every one must cut according to his cloth. And if we look at it in the right way, is not the power and grandeur of God shown just as much behind an insignificant hedge as in the gigantic scale of the Swiss Alps or of a romantic primeval forest? So I do what I cannot leave alone, and for my own edification seek to portray in all delight and love some such little corner or scrap of the great creation, so that my humble work may at least show that the breath of God has also passed over this despised corner."

Edwin had only listened to these confessions, which usually would have interested him more, with half an ear. His thoughts were elsewhere, but in order to say something, he broke in with—

"And do you find people to admire your pictures?"

The little gentleman laughed with embarrassed self-consciousness.

"Well," said he, "I cannot exactly complain. Out of four or five of my little pictures I have always got rid of one; for you see it is an odd thing, but now-a-days everybody must have his specialty, and however worthless it may be, it will yet be looked upon as good

* Literally, hedge-king, or wren.

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for something, because it has the audacity to keep its place, without budging even when critics are ready to tear it to pieces. Yes, I have been astonished myself; but it is the fact that even from Holland and England connoisseurs have been here who would have a genuine 'Zaunkönig,' and nothing better. In the great economy of our Creator every animal finds its place, the mite as well as the elephant.

"But I was just going to tell you about my domestic affairs," continued the little man. "The last five years and seven months I have been a widower; but I can never talk of my dear wife without being overcome by an unmanly and unchristian yet irresistible sorrow. I will therefore say no more about her, except that there is not one hour in all the fifteen years I spent with her that I should wish to forget. She was a Jewess, and I am a good Protestant Christian, but even that was never the cause of one moment's bitterness, for the God in whom we both believed is after all one and the same. As regards our daughter, her mother was quite willing that she should be brought up a Christian, and though she would not be baptized herself, she never attempted to mislead the child. She was buried in the Jewish cemetery, but that did not grieve me. The place where the noble woman was laid to rest is holy, whether it be consecrated by a Christian preacher or a Jewish rabbi. Only since her death I find that I am not so really religious as during her lifetime. My thoughts of heaven are always full of thoughts of her; I never can meet my God face to face as formerly; but I am sure he will not impute it to me as sin."

The painter was silent a moment, his voice seemed to fail him. After a while he began again:

"She has left me a daughter who in many ways is strikingly like her, in others there is a difference. She has a head of her own, and very often we do not understand each other, which was never the case with

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me and her mother. The child is nineteen. I ought not to praise her, but she has the best heart in the world, and such a talent for drawing and painting that I am often astonished, and wonder where she gets it from; for in many things, especially in flowers, I am merely a bungler compared with her. Perhaps I ought rather to have restrained her from this, so that she might have had more time for other things—I mean for the cultivation of her intellect. But she was pleased at earning something so early, and, besides, I was vain of her progress. Now, however, we are being punished. For some time she has been melancholy, because she believes she is ignorant, or rather, as she expresses it, has no clear ideas. She is quite clever and learned enough for me, and Professorin Valentin, our oldest friend, cannot imagine what she finds to complain of in herself, unless it might be her strange religious views. But I see that she suffers a good deal in secret, and as I cannot help her at all, I have had recourse to you, Herr Doctor, and just because you are no regular pedantic schoolmaster, I believe you will soon discover what ails the dear child."

In the mean time they had gone down Friedrich-strasse, and had got as far as the Spree, where they turned to the right round a corner.

"Only a couple of hundred steps more, and we are at home," said the painter. "Do you know, I could not live anywhere else. People always speak so disparagingly of our good Spree, and indeed she is not the proudest of Germany's streams, nor here in the middle of the town the cleanest; but to the eye of a painter, though she may be actually more beautiful in the open country, and particularly in such a romantic spot as the Spree Forest, can there be anything much more attractive than such a view over the quays, the bridges, wharfs, and steps, and the honest old Spree boats which are now lying so lazily there in the mid-day sun, looking, I fancy, just like great gorged,

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lazy crocodiles on the Nile? Look! the boatmen have already dined; there are very few wreaths of blue smoke to be seen coming out of the chimneys; the husband lies on board by his freight of coal, with a bit of sail-cloth over him, the wife with the baby on her knee sits by his side, and fans away the water-flies. Observe the contrast between the brown wood and the shining expanse of water, and then the sunshine behind, with the white spitz who is standing on the cabin steps, and barking at the grey kitten in the other boat. There you have in the middle of our capital a little bit of Holland; you could not wish for anything more exact."

"You have been in Holland then?"

"No; I never could afford it. But if one has seen Dutch pictures, and now the good photographs which —but do please stand there a moment, I must show you something else."

They had just passed a few high houses, and had come to a place where a narrow ditch-like canal running under the road fell into the Spree. On one side rose a three-storied manufactory with its windowless wall. Opposite stood a low building facing the canal, very narrow, but of some considerable depth. There had evidently formerly been a door near the only window opening out on to the quay, but the door had been walled up, and the window was darkened from within by a blind. This ruinous little house was connected by an iron railing with its massive neighbour.

The painter leaned over the railing, and looked up the canal with a pleased face. The dirty brown water flowed so lazily that it appeared to stand still, and exhaled a noxious vapour.

"What does that remind you of?" said he, turning to Edwin.

"What?"

"Why the canal, and the little bridge behind con-

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necting the two banks, the post to which the washing-line is fastened, the whole colouring both of the atmosphere and of the stone—what we painters call *tone*."

"Well, perhaps it has a very distant, not flattering resemblance to Venice, and the Bridge of Sighs."

"Right!" cried the little man, overlooking in his excitement the irony in Edwin's remark. "Friends of mine who have been in Italy have been forced to allow that this prospect is thoroughly Venetian; at all events as one sees the town represented in Canaletto's pictures, which are said to be more sober than the reality. Well, we are in Berlin, and it surely is a harmless joke to speak of my lagoon."

"Of *your* lagoon?"

"Certainly; I live here."

"In this——"

"In this hovel; you need not be afraid of the word. For it is certainly not a doge's palace where I have passed my life for the last twenty years, and yet I would not give up my hovel for all the splendour of the old Sposo del Mare, as the Venetians called the doge. Besides, it is more cheerful within than one would guess from the outside. See! where the door is now bricked up was formerly the entrance into a miserable, dirty pot-house for the boatmen, and behind that a few wretched rooms and a hole of a kitchen. The stable and coach-house of the wood-merchant were adjoining; his wood-yard, as you see, is quite close to our little house. Just after my marriage, when, in spite of all my treasure in happiness and hopes, I was after all but a poor devil, the owner of this tavern had just been taken up by the police on a charge of concealing stolen goods, &c. The wood-merchant would not have another schnaps-wirth * on his premises, and the habitation was hardly suitable for anybody else, so I got it very cheap, had the wall bricked up, so as to have my studio in the front, and

* Brandy-landlord.

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if it has cost us trouble and money to get rid of the traces of the beer and dirt which had so long reigned undisturbed—but you shall judge for yourself whether we have succeeded."

He now went before, and led Edwin through a large gate across the spacious wood-yard. Between the high piles of strongly-smelling pine and beech planks ran a narrow path, leading directly to the "hovel," which here from the side did not look much more distinguished than from the front.

"These six windows belong to me," said the painter, with modest self-consciousness.

Then he opened the low door, and begged Edwin to enter.

Within it certainly did look more comfortable, except for a certain gloom and dampness, than one might have expected from the old building. There was a hall with light-coloured walls, hung with etchings in plain wooden frames. A door on the opposite side seemed to open on to the canal.

"Please will you turn to the right?" said the painter. "To the left is our sitting-room, my daughter's little room, the kitchen, and bed-room. To the right all is given up to art, as far as my narrow means will allow; for though I sleep in my studio, yet even in my dreams I am never more than the Zaunkönig, and never imagine that I have become a Canaletto because I live by a lagoon."

With this he opened the door into his studio. The little room certainly had now no appearance of having once sheltered drunken Spree boatmen, but on dark days it must have been hard to paint therein skies *à la Claude Lorraine.*

Two windows looked out on the canal and on to the dark party wall of the neighbouring house, which kept off every ray of sun. At one window stood a low table, with all the tools of a wood engraver; at the other a raised desk, before which sat a young girl

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absorbed in her painting. A nosegay of fresh garden flowers stood in a little vase before her, and she was employed in painting on a china plate a wreath of natural leaves and blossoms. On the walls hung various sketches, together with a few finished pictures, all of which one recognized from afar as genuine "Zaunkönigs," while on an easel not far from the front window stood a new half-finished "hedge-landscape," over which the painter threw a cloth on entering.

"I do not wish you to find me too much *en négligé*," said he, reddening. "My beginnings are usually clumsy, and I daub a long time on my canvas before there is anything worth seeing. But there is my daughter Lea. She has her mother's name. Well, my child, you will be pleased with me; I have brought you something which you have long desired."

The girl had risen at her father's first words, but when she saw the stranger she inclined her head modestly, and remained standing in her place.

"I don't know what I did desire, dear father," said she, noticing with surprise the mysterious manner of the little man, who seemed to enjoy her embarrassment.

"A teacher, child; in fact this very learned Herr Doctor, who will not come to the end of his Latin quite so quickly as the good Fräulein we had before. But he wishes to see how far you have got before he makes up his mind whether he will give you lessons. Come, come, you need not be frightened. The examination will not cost you your head, even though you may have to rack your brains now and then. Is it not so, Herr Doctor?"

The maiden, whose face was usually delicately pale, had suddenly blushed a deep red, as if she hardly knew whether jest or earnest were meant. Edwin had time to consider her. She was taller than her

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father, of a strong though slight build, and seemed to be unlike him in everything, with the exception of her strikingly small hands and feet.

There was no trace of gaiety in the fine though perhaps almost too high brow, nor in the large very dark eyes, which reminded one of the mother's race. Otherwise there was nothing Jewish in the form of the face, in the perfectly straight nose, in the mouth which had a certain sensitive strength and fulness, which softened the sternness of the other features. She wore her thick hair in plaits twisted in a curious fashion, so that the pale oval of her face was, as it were, enclosed in a dark frame. A simple brown dress, which in spite of the fashion she wore without crinoline, completed the unusually serious impression made by the youthful figure.

At the first glance Edwin saw clearly that he might congratulate himself on having such a pupil.

"Your father is only joking," he said, with a smile; "we are not going to hold a judicial examination. On the contrary, if you can assure me, Fräulein, that you consider yourself thoroughly ignorant, you shall be excused all further examination."

"Well, I confess to that," laughed her father; "you will not object to the necessary school rudiments."

"By no means," answered Edwin, as he came nearer and examined the painting. "But do you see, Fräulein, I once had to teach a young lady, who in the very first hour overpowered me with such a mass of learning, about cuneiform characters, Egyptian mythology, history of art and literature, that compared with her I seemed to be at my a b c. Indeed her wise head was like the inside of a rag shop, where the most opposite things lie side by side without any order or reason. But in her innocence she had not the slightest misgiving that there could exist such a thing as clearness and connection, or indeed cause

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and effect of facts and ideas. So I paid her and her mother the compliment of saying that I found no room for improvement in the young lady's education, and withdrew as quickly as possible."

The father and daughter remained silent. Edwin walked about the room in a preoccupied way, and looked at the sketches and studies.

"Well, my child?" the little painter said at last interrogatively, for he was beginning to feel uneasy, and did not seem quite to understand the state of affairs.

"Then you will have no reason to complain of me," said the girl, in a voice which trembled with suppressed excitement, while her eyes were strangely bright. "I am quite the reverse of that young lady. So long as my mother taught me all learning was a pleasure. She did not make it easy for me; I was obliged to find out everything for myself, and might never repeat anything without thought. If she ever *did* find me doing so, she blamed me. Perhaps I did not learn much from her, certainly no great variety; but it was all so interesting that I have not forgotten one word of it. She died so early; and since then I have tried to get on with books, but it was as if everything were dead, and I had no longer any pleasure in learning. I had better confess at once, Herr Doctor, for fear that after all you should expect too much, that I have a special aversion to history and geography, and indeed no memory for these things. On the other hand—but you are smiling. I knew very well that you did not expect anything quite so bad as this."

"And what *do* you like, Fräulein? What is there that you still wish to learn? Do not be offended at my smile; it only meant that I was not very different at your age."

She was silent, while she cast a shy glance at her father. The little man appeared to understand it; he went to the other window, and set to work with his pieces of wood.

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"I wish," said she, lowering her voice, while she fixed her dark eyes on the flowers in the vase, "I wish I could understand about many things which are now all dark to me. Often, when I am sitting still over my work, thoughts occur to me which quite frighten me. Then they disappear again because I cannot hold them fast and think them out. It is as if one was in a strange place in the middle of the night, and as if a flash of lightning were for a second to illuminate the road, and then immediately afterwards the darkness to fall again; or as if I were reading part of a book which made me think and think and long to ask the author to tell me exactly what he meant, but I get no answer. In many things," continued she, in a still lower voice, "I feel that I am in contradiction with my dear father, and with a friend of ours, the Professorin Valentin, who is half a theologian, while I—it has certainly not been for want of will. That which I cannot grasp does not exist for me, or at all events it makes me rather unhappy than happy; and yet when they say that the mysteries of the world and the thoughts of God cannot be grasped by our human intellect, I feel that they are right. But the doubt whether we can know anything, and how much, or whether we must give up all hopes of knowing the truth unless one can believe what one does not understand, leaves me no peace."

She broke off suddenly as her father looked as if he were about to approach them, and threw a quick imploring glance at Edwin, as if to conjure him not to violate the secrecy of her confession. He smiled again, and turned to the little man, who approached quite unsuspiciously.

"Your daughter, Herr König," said he, "has distinguished herself in the preliminary examination. I can only wish that the pupil may be as satisfied with her teacher as he hopes to be with her. If you like we will begin to-morrow, and I will come every other

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day at any hour in the afternoon that you like to settle."

Herr König looked at his daughter.

"I sincerely thank you," said he; "one can see by her eyes how pleased she is. As regards your terms—"

"I have only one condition to make, my dear sir: that no one should be present at the lessons. That is always my way, unless I give public lectures."

"If that is all, Lea, on the other side in your sitting-room, where you have your writing-table—but suppose we let our friend see the whole house, so that he may choose the best study."

When Edwin took leave, half an hour later, he had made acquaintance with every corner of the little house, with the niche in the sitting-room where the bust of Lea's mother stood behind the green sofa, with the ivy bower at the window, and lastly with the steps down to the lagoon, where a friendly old maid-servant was busy with the washing, though she regarded the visitor with curiosity, and cast a glance at her young mistress which was seemingly illustrative of Jean Paul's play upon the word Lehrmeister who may turn into a Mehrleister.*

When he had taken leave he stood for a moment in the street by the railing of the canal, and he thought, "After all, it is not so incomprehensible why the inhabitants of this 'hovel' would not change it for a palace."

* Lehrmeister, schoolmaster; Mehrleister, one who does more (than is expected of him).

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CHAPTER VIII.

He had not sauntered far down the quay before all these images suddenly disappeared from his memory as one blows out a candle, and were replaced in the most vivid colours by the form of the unknown lady of the opera house.

The sensation was so sudden that he was actually startled, and stood still for a moment to calm the beating of his heart. She could not have surprised him more if she had appeared before him in the solitary street.

"This does not look like improvement," said he to himself, smiling half in pity, half in joy. He took off his hat, and stooped over the railing. Below, the river flowed noiselessly. A half-plucked bird and a bitten apple were carried by.

"Poor thing!" said Edwin, "you have now escaped, and, if non-existence is better than existence, are to be congratulated that you are no longer attracted by red-cheeked dainties or gnawed at by hunger. But the sunshine is so beautiful, and apples taste very sweet, and I think the most miserable nest would be more comfortable than this dirty nothingness which is now carrying you unconsciously away."

He stood listening. Few people and no carriages came this way; but in the distance he heard the hum

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and roar of the streets through which the chief stream of traffic rolled. He quite enjoyed the feeling of being surrounded by this thousand-fold life, while he sunned himself through and through in solitude. At last, however, he had had too much of a good thing. He went back into the shade, and now continued slowly, keeping beside the river to the place where a few short by-streets lead directly into the Thiergarten.

Here also, at this hour of noon, the place was deserted, and as he was accustomed to think out his problems as he walked, he was well acquainted with all the paths where he could be most secure of meeting nobody. But to-day he was in no mood to philosophize; in his favourite spot, the peninsula not far from the marble statue of the king and the Louisa island, where a few weeks before he had thought out his best ideas for the prize essay, he threw himself on to the grass under the thick shade of a large copper beech, and shut his eyes, in order to give himself up, without let or hindrance, to his hopeless love dream.

In spite of his nine and twenty years, it was with him exactly as it is with others in their first boyish love; the feeling of losing oneself, of being carried away, of suffering violence, is so strong and delicious that it swallows up all other emotions, and the thought of possession, nay, even the longing for a return, cannot be compared with it—certainly not in its first stages, and in such a virgin heart as that of our philosopher. It was just the very unforeseen, aimless, unreasonable nature of the experience which to him, over-tired as he was by severe work and hard thinking, was like a bath in a shoreless ocean, where, lying on his back above the unfathomable depth, he allowed the waves to rock him.

A hoarse grind-organ, which suddenly struck up the "Prince of Arcadia" quite close to him, waked him unpleasantly from his stillness, in which he had forgotten both time and the world. He sprang up

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hurriedly, and sought to escape from the heartless noise. In a modest garden restaurant, where there were only a few citizens drinking coffee, he dined hurriedly, and then, as the seats were beginning to fill with afternoon visitors, he departed in haste, he hardly knew whither; he only felt that he was ashamed to appear by daylight in the same helpless condition before his brother, to whom in the night he had so unhesitatingly confessed everything.

So he strode straight through the trees, and, without seeking anything in particular, let his eye wander around, when suddenly as he came into a wider path he stood still, and with a cry of astonishment gazed into the distance.

There he saw nothing more striking than a red and white striped waistcoat, which, with the sunshine full on it, stood out most distinctly. But therein was the well-remembered little figure of a boy about fourteen years old, with tall shirt-collars and stiff necktie, in leather-coloured livery and breeches of the same material. The lad was sitting on a seat, and looked absurdly old-fashioned; he had placed his shiny oil-skin hat beside him, and was most busily occupied in smartening up his light-coloured poll with a brush, glancing from time to time in a small hand-glass.

Edwin would have recognized him among a whole crowd of miniature footmen; but he had not much time for consideration, for he had hardly made two or three steps with the firm determination of finding out from the boy something about his mistress, when a slight form in a light summer dress and a broad-brimmed Leghorn hat rose from a neighbouring seat, which had been concealed by the projecting bough of a chestnut tree, made a sign to the boy, and then, holding a book which she had been reading, and with a parasol across her shoulder, went quickly towards the principal path which runs through the Thiergarten from the Brandenburg gate.

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She went so quickly that the little fellow in the large top-boots had great difficulty in keeping up with her, and Edwin even had to make large steps. When he passed the bench on which she had been sitting with her book, he saw a bright-coloured ribbon lying on the ground, which she had probably dropped before her sudden departure. He picked it up; it was a white satin book-marker with gold fringe at each end, and on which the well-known symbols of faith, hope, and charity were somewhat clumsily embroidered in blue and black beads. This discovery detained him a minute, and in that minute the owner of the book-marker had reached the smart carriage which was waiting for her on the road, the little groom had opened the door, the lady had stepped in without his help, and the horses had started, carrying the light vehicle rapidly towards the town.

To-day, however, Edwin had not only better luck than the day before, but also the sense to seize hold of it. An empty droschke happened to come sleepily by; he sprang into it, promising the driver double fare if he caught up the carriage and kept it in sight.

They drove through the gate, down the Linden, turned to the right into Friedrichstrasse, then again to the left into Jägerstrasse, where the carriage stopped before a smart new house. The little servant sprang like an ape from the box, opened the door, and followed the lady, who had sprung out lightly, into the house, whereupon the carriage drove off at once.

Edwin had left his droschke at the corner, and now, with a beating heart, he went up and down two or three times on the opposite side of the street, looking at the open windows over the way, in the hope of seeing the charming face appear at one of them. But there was nothing to be seen, except a stand of flowers, with splendid palms and other leafy plants, in one of the rooms on the first floor, and in another

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window a large bird-cage of bright brass wire. So it was here that she lived. He had in his pocket a most valid pretext for visiting her, yet it was long before he could make up his mind to go up the steps and to enter the house.

Even when he had made up his mind he hesitated a long time at the door, while he tried to recall his somewhat rusty French in case she should really understand no German. Then he felt ashamed of his boyish timidity, and pulled the bell with such good will that the sound went all through the quiet house.

The door was opened immediately, the striped waistcoat appeared, and stared with a somewhat disapproving glance out of his round, watery-blue eyes at the noisy visitor.

"Have the goodness, my lad," said Edwin, "to inform your mistress that some one who has found something wishes to speak to her."

"What name must I give?" asked the well-broken dwarf.

"My name does not matter; only do as I said."

The little fellow disappeared, but returned in a very short time, which Edwin took advantage of to repeat some of his French, and said—

"My mistress bids me ask you to step in here for an instant."

He opened the door of a small ante-room, round which there were only a few light cane chairs, and a marble table on which were lying a book and a fan.

"What is your name, young one?" asked Edwin, seating himself with as much ease as was possible on one of the chairs.

"My real name is Hans Jacob, but my mistress calls me Jean."

"Is this your first place, little Jean Jaques? you appear to be a precocious genius."

"Before this I was with a baron; there I learnt to

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ride, and to hold the reins when he got out of his cab, for he drove himself. Now we only have a coachman on job."

"And how long have you been with your present mistress?"

"Only a fortnight. A very easy place; every week my Sunday to myself. We have also got a lady's maid."

"Can you speak French, Jean Jaques?" The boy reddened. Edwin seemed to have touched a tender spot.

"My mistress speaks German," he answered. "But she is ringing; I must go."

Edwin mechanically took up the book which was lying on the table.

"'Père Goriot.' Probably a wandering Russian or Pole who speaks all languages. They are said to imbibe Balzac with their mother's milk."

He stood up and threw a glance into the neighbouring rooms. In the little drawing-room adjoining the light came through heavy crimson curtains, and was still further softened by the wide, fanlike branches of the palms. A parrot was swinging himself in his ring before the mirror without uttering a sound. The walls were dark, the ceiling of brown wood; on the marble chimney-piece stood a heavy clock of green bronze. The contrast made the next little room, into which the half-open door allowed him to peep, appear all the lighter and more cheerful. The hangings on the walls and the light gilded rods which fastened them, a bit of a handsome side-board with glittering plate, and in the middle, exactly opposite the door, a table with the cloth spread, and so far as he could see with only one place. He could hear the indefatigable chirping and fluttering of the birds in the large cage.

Edwin had often had opportunity, when giving lessons in noble houses, to compare the furniture of the "tub" with the luxury of large establishments.

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The contrast had never troubled him. Now he by chance caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror, and he thought he looked like the shepherd who by mistake had found his way into the fairy palace. He saw that it was quite hopeless to improve his attire in any way, but it struck him that at all events he might take his gloves out of the pocket where he was in the habit of carrying them, when the other side door of the ante-room was suddenly opened, and there appeared the beautiful bewitching fairy, followed by her little page.

She made a movement of displeased surprise, and stood still on the threshold. Then she half turned to the boy, and seemed to find fault with him, while he excused himself in a whisper. Edwin, meantime, had leisure to consider her and to recover somewhat from his confusion.

Certainly she was of such unusual beauty that she might well have turned the heads of more *blasé* women lovers than our philosopher. His description of her to his brother had been fairly correct, but now by daylight there was a great difference in her appearance; her colouring was brighter, the expression of her eyes stranger, there was in them a look of quiet indifference and distinction such as one sees in those of children, who trouble themselves about nothing, and neither hate nor love.

Her light dress, which surrounded her like a cloud, became her exceedingly well, and made her hair and the well-known little curls on her neck appear all the darker.

She greeted the stranger with a scarcely perceptible movement of the head. "Sir," she said, looking at him interrogatively.

"Forgive me, Madam," he replied, with an unembarrassed manner, which he assumed with tolerably successful hypocrisy. "I could not resist taking advantage of a favourable chance, and of presenting

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myself in person as the finder of— Besides, I thought —I should not be quite a stranger to you."

"You? to me?"

"Yesterday evening in the theatre I had the pleasure of being your neighbour in the box during an act."

She looked at him from head to foot with surprise.

"I do not recollect," she said shortly.

"Well, I cannot help it," he said, with a smile. He was quite glad that she treated him so coldly. His pride, which had been intimidated by her beauty, now awoke suddenly, and enabled him completely to regain his calmness and cheerfulness.

"You have found something of mine?" she said, somewhat impatiently. "I have missed nothing. May I beg you, sir, to tell me——"

He drew the satin ribbon from his pocket and held it out to her. Her coldness vanished suddenly, she approached him with a childlike joy sparkling in her eyes.

"Oh, that!" cried she. "Yes, that does indeed belong to me. I must have dropped it an hour ago, so that I hardly could have missed it yet. I thank you, sir, I thank you very much It is a souvenir."

She took it out of his hand, and for the first time favoured him with a friendly glance. Then she made him a curtsey, which was very like a dismissal, and retired a step towards the door.

He, however, remained motionless in the same place.

"I think, Madam, that an honest finder is entitled to claim a suitable reward; would you think it unsuitable if I were to ask for an answer to one question?"

"To what question?"

"Whether you yourself worked the book-marker?"

"Why do you wish to know that?"

"Only to satisfy a most indiscreet curiosity; only because I should then draw all kinds of conclusions as

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to the character of its beautiful owner. You know that the style is the man, and those who are not authors can only show what they are in their embroidery."

She looked at him quite quietly, as if she would have felt it beneath her dignity to betray that his jesting tone was disagreeable to her.

"I did not work it myself," she answered; "in that case I would not have cared whether I had lost it or not, especially as it is not even pretty. My youngest sister gave it to me for my hymn-book when I was confirmed."

"Curious!" said he, as if to himself.

"What is curious?"

"That book-markers as well as books should have destinies of their own. From a hymn-book to Balzac!"

"Balzac! How do you know?"

"I ask your pardon; but while I was waiting I opened that book. Do you read French by preference?"

She again let her wondering eyes rest upon him. This strange man, who was obviously making pretexts to question her, and to intrude upon her, was beginning to make her uneasy. But he was so perfectly calm that she could find no words with which to get rid of him.

"Yes," she said, "I learnt it from my father, who was a German by birth, but had lived long in Paris. He found so much that he remembered in these books."

"And do these books please you? Père Goriot, for instance?"

"They interest me, at any rate. The French is so good, and so is the tone of the book. Certainly there is much that shocks one. Those heartless daughters, who look on with unconcern and let their old father ruin himself for their sakes; that is horrible."

"Thank you," said he eagerly. "I am rejoiced

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that this is your opinion. Good tone, but bad music. But it is astonishing what a clever author may put before us. If we were to meet such people in life, I think we should decline to have anything to do with them, while in books we put up with the worst company."

She seemed about to answer; but at this moment the little page entered, and said a few words to her in an undertone.

"I am coming immediately," answered his young mistress; then, turning to Edwin, "I regret, sir, to be called away. Again my best thanks. Jean, show the gentleman out."

The boy prepared to obey. Edwin seemed not to notice him.

"I had one more request to make."

"Sir."

"I have looked through the door into your pleasant rooms, where everything seems provided that luxury can desire. There is only one thing that I have not seen, which to me is one of the necessities of life."

"What?"

"A bookcase. Even Balzac, I see, comes from the circulating library. Forgive my frankness, but I cannot conceive how such beautiful hands can like to hold a book which has lain on so many tables, and has passed through hands of such very questionable cleanliness."

He saw how she blushed, while she looked almost with consternation towards the book on the marble table.

"I have not been here very long," she answered, "and have not had time to think of procuring books."

"Will you allow me," said he, "to put my small collection at your disposition? It is not exactly rich in French literature; but if you don't really object to German books——"

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"I know so few," she answered, with obvious embarrassment, which rendered her face even more charming than its previous expression of distinguished coldness had done. "In the house of my parents literature was not often the subject of conversation. Only think, I have hardly read anything even of Goethe!"

"All the better, for then you have the greatest enjoyment to look forward to. If you have no objection I will take the liberty of bringing you a few volumes to-morrow."

She appeared to be considering.

"I cannot possibly allow you to take so much trouble for a stranger. I will send to a bookseller."

"Are you afraid that I shall again trouble you in person?" said he, as he stood at the door. "I give you my word, Madam, that I shall only look upon myself as a commissioner, and deliver the books at the door; but perhaps, now that I have honestly confessed my curiosity to you, you have no longer any confidence in my discretion?"

She looked at him inquiringly for a moment, and then said—

"Well, bring me what you will. I shall be grateful to you. Good-bye!"

She bowed slightly to him, and disappeared into the neighbouring room. Edwin had no alternative but to withdraw also.

Ontside in the hall, when the door had closed behind him, he stood still and shut his eyes, in order to collect his ideas. He still saw her standing before him, in her beauty and calm unconcern, and a deep sadness, he knew not why, overcame him. Though he knew but little of life in the great world, or in the *demi monde,* this much seemed at all events clear to him, that things were not entirely as they should be with this enchanted princess, that she was like a rare bird in a golden cage, and that she no

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longer belonged to herself. And then again he thought of her calm, surprised, childlike eyes, and of the proud little mouth, which she had a habit of pouting while she reflected, and it seemed to him inconceivable, an insult to all intuitive feeling, that this mysterious being should have anything to do with light-minded guilt, or still worse with low depravity.

At this moment his own passion was swallowed up in unselfish sympathy with her fate. And yet he was not much wiser than an hour before. Her name even was not to be found on the door. Of whom could he make inquiries, even if he had not had a natural dislike to crooked ways? But at that very moment chance came straight to his assistance.

A well-to-do middle-aged woman, in bonnet and shawl, carrying a basket on her arm, came slowly downstairs, and was evidently startled to find a stranger loitering about in the hall. She inquired, as if she were responsible for things going right in the house, whom he wanted. He answered that he was just going away, that he had only brought the young lady something which she had lost. Then, as she followed him, he stood still and ejaculated absently, "It is a pity."

The woman stood still also, and put one of her arms akimbo.

"What is a pity?" she asked. "What do you know of my lodgers that you have reason to pity them? I beg to say, sir, that there is nobody in my house whom you need pity."

"Indeed I meant no harm," said he, sincerely. "But everything seems to show that this young lady is of good family, and yet she is so solitary. Who can know what unhappy reason——"

As he said this he went down a few steps; the woman, however, did not move, but leaned against the banisters, as if she could not resist the temptation of parading her superior knowledge of the world.

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"Good family!" said she, shrugging her shoulders. "Good gracious me! It is the clothes. And how long this splendour will last, Heaven knows! Do you think that the fine furniture, the plate and the silk curtains, belong to her? Bless you, my good sir! no, it does not even belong to me, for I never let furnished lodgings. God forbid! One may so easily lose one's good name with people who perhaps have not even a bed of their own. This house has belonged to me for ten years; my name is Sturzmüller, you must know, and I am a widow, against whom nobody can say a word. And as for that fine young lady upstairs, if I don't soon find out that she is all right, I will do something or other to astonish her. I won't have any lodgers whom people can shake their heads about and say 'it is a pity.'"

With that she stalked downstairs past Edwin, and seemed to have said her last word. But now it was his turn to stand still.

"Then you don't know either what to make of this wonderful creature," said he, with assumed astonishment, while his heart beat with excitement. "At all events she must have mentioned her name."

The woman turned round to him, as if anxious to look once more at her interlocutor, to see whether he were really as innocent as his questions, or whether he were not a cunning spy, trying to pump her.

His homely appearance, his careless and yet respectable attire, seemed to reassure her.

"Her name!" she grumbled. "What does a name matter to me? Toinette Marchand. May not anybody call herself that, and yet have a very different name in reality? Besides, I don't care twopence whether my lodgers are called Heinz or Kunz, so long only as I know where they come from. But this one—you would hardly believe it, but after a whole fortnight I am no wiser about her, whether she be good for anything or only plated goods; you understand me?

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For in reality the rooms on the first floor are let to Count—— I dare not tell you his name. He had the rooms furnished in the first instance for a cousin, he said; what kind of a cousin that may be, one may guess. But we shall not improve the world, my good sir, and if I were to be my lodgers' keeper I should have enough to do. However, at last everything was ready, and as neat as a doll's house; the Count spent a mint of money on it, but the cousin snapped her fingers at him and left him in the lurch. One from the Opera, as I learned later from the valet, a bad lot she must have been; she ran away from him one day with a Russian. Well, it was quite *tuttegal* to me. I got my rent every quarter; whenever I liked I could walk about on the beautiful pile carpets in the apartments, and though I think a great deal of good morals, what call was there for me to open my eyes too wide. But one fine morning—I was watering the palms in the stand—lo and behold, there comes at last my lord count with a beautiful woman, but not his cousin. Who then? that is just the question. He behaved most respectfully to her, but while she was looking at everything he whispered to me that I was to make as though it was furnished lodgings, and that I was not to charge more than twelve thalers a month. Well, it was all one to me if she liked to pay twice over, and besides it is a very low price for five such rooms, kitchen, and cellar. The young lady seemed extraordinarily pleased with it all, she settled at once to remain, and sent for her box from the railway. I was to find her a housemaid, who fetches all her meals from the restaurant. She herself hired a lady's maid and the page. There! since then, though I have often inquired whether I could do nothing for her, I have hardly exchanged twenty words with her. Can you fancy it? So proud and hardened and so young."

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"And the Count?" Edwin asked, with difficulty.

"That is just the most suspicious thing. He went away at once that first day, and since then has never once crossed the threshold. Even the valet has not once showed his face, so I could learn nothing. What has happened, whether they quarrelled at the very first, Heaven only knows! At all events she does not seem much troubled by it, and denies herself nothing; carriage and horses, the most beautiful clothes, every evening the theatre. Ah, you and I have not got to pay for it, so we need not care. But it is quite plain that everything is not as it should be; for out of nothing one can get nothing, and anything like this I never did see. Do you think that any living soul in the shape of a man has crossed her threshold? Not at any hour in the day or night, I can tell you. For though I live on the third story, I know every cat that comes out and in, and her maid does not keep her mouth shut. Now I ask you how comes it that she is so young and pretty too, and has so much money, and yet is always alone, if there is nothing behind, something perhaps what would do for the new *pitavel*,* you understand? No, no, I won't have that sort of thing in my house; my motto is, the cards on the table and the honours turned up; for what will one's reputation serve one if one fine day the police come into one's house? However, you will not make any use of all this? It was so on my mind that I could not keep it in, and my words and deeds have no call to be afraid of the light."

By this time she had after many pauses reached the front door, and making Edwin a polite bow, she crossed the road to a shop.

He also took his departure. He had not even the courage to look back at her windows from the oppo-

* A collection of criminal stories. There is an old one and a new one.

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site side; she would be so astonished to see him still haunting the premises. And yet how much would he have given to have caught only a fleeting glimpse of her, to disperse the thick clouds of suspicion and sorrow which had oppressed him more and more the whole time that the landlady was chattering!

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CHAPTER IX.

REGINCHEN'S birthday was meantime being kept in the Dorotheen Strasse. The entertainment was to be given upstairs, in her parents' large sitting-room, where to-day, as indeed every day, the workmen and apprentices took their seats. Madame Feyertag insisted that before they came to table they should collectively wash their hands and brush their jackets. This proceeding was often hurried over, but to-day it was undertaken with a solemn thoroughness, which proved that their homage to their master's daughter was not a mere matter of form, but that it came from their hearts. The foreman, indeed, in right of his superior social position, ventured to appear with a bouquet, which he presented with a few well-chosen words to the blushing girl. Madame Feyertag pretended to see nothing of this. She always seemed to suspect the good man of considering it a standing tradition of the house that the foreman should marry the master's daughter, and though she had herself experienced the blessing of such a mésalliance, yet she looked higher for her only daughter. Her husband had no suspicion in the matter. If he did let his thoughts wander to the past, it was to recall the very different attentions which, even without any particular festive occasion, he had taken the liberty of paying to

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the female members of his master's family. He was very happy, ate three large pieces of the celebrated Kuchen, and at last sent for two bottles of wine out of the cellar, in which he himself proposed Reginchen's health, in a speech which despite the wondrous mixture of fatherly tenderness with incomprehensible allusions to Schopenhauer, was regarded by the assembled workmen as a pattern of oratorical art.

This solemn meal had, however, not lasted more than half an hour, and it was exactly half-past twelve when the little heroine of the day carried the brothers' dinner up to the "tub." For the small sum they paid for their board they never had anything better served up to them than the occupants of the workshop; but Madame Feyertag, who had a good heart, and for Balder especially, on account of his beauty and delicacy, an almost motherly tenderness, was always careful to keep back the best bits for her boarders, before serving her own people.

When Reginchen entered the brothers' room, full of elation at all these festivities, and of pride that she should be the means of bringing them two large slices of Kuchen, she was surprised to find only Balder, who was still sitting at his lathe, and who on her entrance hastily concealed something in his pocket. She was afraid that the dinner would have to be carried down to be kept warm, as happened so often, and at one o'clock her brother the engineer was to come and fetch her. But she was reassured by Balder's telling her that Edwin was not coming back to dinner at all that day. She laid the table quickly, and as elegantly as she could with so simple a dinner service, placing the plate of Kuchen in the centre, and ornamenting it with a few flowers which she had taken out of her bouquet. Then she stood and regarded her work with an air of roguish satisfaction, calling to Balder to come and not let it get cold.

"Dear Reginchen," said the youth, limping to the

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table, and appearing somewhat embarrassed, "I have no beautiful flowers such as George has given you, you know nothing green and blossoming ever grows on my lathe, but I do wish to keep your eighteenth birthday as well as I can, not only because I am going to eat some of your birthday Kuchen. Will you accept this little box, which I have made myself, as a souvenir? I am afraid you must fill it yourself, for I have had no time to buy needles, thimbles, silk, and all the things it is meant to contain."

He drew forth the brightly-polished, pretty thing, and handed it to her, opening it so that she should see the inside. Her round blooming face grew red with pleasure, though she did not think it consistent with good manners to take it at once.

"But, Herr Walter," she cried, passing the palms of her hands over her temples, as was her habit when embarrassed, "I asked you not to make me any presents. Mother will be angry; she thinks that you work too much anyhow; you should spare yourself more. And such a beautiful thing as this, why, it must have taken at least a fortnight, and I—I am not worthy; it is *too* pretty. Is it really for me? If I only knew what I could do in return——"

"I will tell you, Reginchen," said he, and his pale cheek grew red. "Sit with me a little; it is so dull to eat alone, and on your birthday I should like to enjoy myself. The Kuchen will taste so much better which your kind mother has sent me. If you leave me alone with it, I shall probably not touch it, just for sorrow at being so solitary on such a day."

His voice was one which it was difficult to resist, and the maiden felt so much sympathy for his state, and so much childlike joy at the present, that she immediately pushed a chair to the table, and seated herself opposite to him.

"Well, I ought not to stay after I have carried up the dinner," she said, shyly, "and I ought to come

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again to fetch the plates when you have done; but to-day mother will not mind, she will think I am dressing to go out, and Fritz will not come before one. He has only got leave for the afternoon, and has to come in from Moabit. Do tell me, Herr Walter, how can you bear to live as you do? But your soup is getting cold."

She pushed his plate eagerly towards him, as he seemed to have no special wish to eat, and with the prettiest, most insinuating coquetry, placed the spoon in his hand.

"To live as I do?" he smiled, but actually took a mouthful of soup. "I hardly know how any one could live more happily than I do. I fare like a prince, with a green tree before my open window, and the beautiful sun, and the little landlady herself who condescends to wait upon me. I should be a monster of ingratitude if I wished for anything better."

"Nonsense," said the girl, shaking her head. "You are joking, but you know very well what I mean. Is it not nearly two years since you went out? I should die if I had to stop always in the same place."

"Because you are a little water wagtail, Reginchen; but perhaps I ought not to call you that now that you are eighteen years old, though I believe you will always be the same as you were five years ago, when we first came, when you would not carry more than one of my brother's books upstairs at a time, only to give yourself more running backwards and forwards. You see running is not exactly my forte; but it is a strange thing about happiness, if a poor fellow cannot run after it, it is kind enough to come to him, and I cannot count the happy hours that I have spent in this room."

"Because you are so humble, and, as my mother says, always content with everything."

"Not in the least, Reginchen; your good mother is quite mistaken in her opinion of me. On the contrary,

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I am very much spoilt. I do not at all put up with everything, and it is just for that very reason that I have no longing to go out into the crowd of rough, coarse men who are nothing to me, in order to see what trouble they give themselves to pass their time, or rather to forget their little miserable, joyless selves; just as they strive by dressing smart and making a noise to appear something which they are not, taking their stand on a heap of thalers, which they have scraped together, God knows how. And now, compare my life with theirs, Reginchen: always with such a brother and a few good friends, just enough to remind me that the best of men cannot compare with Edwin; with such a nice comfortable house, where we are so well taken care of; with no anxieties, and—then——"

He hesitated, and blushed more deeply.

"Will you please pass me the vegetable dish, Reginchen?" he said, to hide his confusion.

She appeared unconscious of it.

"That is all very well," said she; "but are you not always ailing, Herr Walter, and have to bear a great deal of pain? And after all, people say health is the greatest blessing."

He pushed back his plate, and looked at her with such a beaming look out of his blue eyes that she herself became somewhat confused, while she wondered whether she had said anything stupid or childish. For the first time she did not feel at ease with him, and also for the first time she acknowledged that he really was very beautiful, which her mother had always maintained, but which she had hitherto refused to allow; anything that was sickly and motionless being so repugnant to her cheerful, lively nature.

"Dear Reginchen," said he, "as you are eighteen to-day, I can tell you that much, indeed most, that people say, and that is afterwards repeated backwards and forwards, is quite contrary to the real truth.

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Health, for example, which is considered as the first condition of all happiness, is no more happiness itself than all the other things which men wish for—riches, talent, beauty, or whatever it may be. Whether any of these good things really make a man happy depends on whether he can use them. I knew a man who had never even had a finger ache, and yet he was not a gainer, partly because it was his natural state, and therefore he looked upon it as a matter of course, just as much as breathing, and partly because his rude health allowed him to embitter the life of other people, having nothing in the world to tame his strength. Only after he had had a fall, and his pain and helplessness had rendered him dependent on others, did he realize how much there is in human love, and in the thousand little joys of life which he had hitherto despised. However, Reginchen, I do not wish to persuade you to change places with me. It would be a pretty business if a little water wagtail like you had to sit still or to limp; but at the same time, though I wish you may enjoy your blooming health for the rest of your life, yet if ever it should be otherwise, I am convinced that you would understand me, and would see——"

A knock at the door here interrupted them. A commissioner entered, and throwing a sly, inquisitive glance at the couple who were sitting together, so deeply absorbed in conversation, he pushed into the room a hamper of wine, and said—

"Dr. Marquard sends his compliments, and these are the samples he spoke of; he will call in a few days to see if they have done their duty."

When he had departed, saying impertinently: "I wish you joy," Balder stood up and exclaimed—

"There, Reginchen, will you not allow now that I am one of the happiest people under the sun? If I had two sound legs like Edwin, who knows where I should be wandering at this moment. Instead of

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which, I, poor devil, am having a most enviable time, am keeping your birthday by a cosy and sumptuous repast in the company of the heroine of the day, surrounded by flowers and Kuchen; and at the very moment when our talk is becoming a little too serious, fortune puts before me some splendid wine, which we will drink to renew our gaiety.

"You need not get a corkscrew, Reginchen; a gimlet out of my tool-box will do just as well. And let me tell you, we two shall be doing a good work if we open one of these bottles. The wine is really intended for Edwin to make him strong; but though in most respects he is a perfect man, yet there are some things in which one can do nothing with him. He is quite capable of wilfully sending back the whole hamper, though it comes from an old friend, simply because our finances will not usually allow of such luxury. No, I must make him believe that the wine is good for me too, and, as we always share everything, he will end by drinking with me. Come, Reginchen, you must put up with the tumbler, for we have not yet got any crystal goblets. To your very good health, and may you never discover of how little consequence this 'greatest blessing' is, because I hope you will always have every other blessing besides."

He handed her a glass, and they gaily clinked their glasses together, after she had first refused, saying it always went to her head. Even then she only put out her lips and took a little sip, while he drank his at a draught. Then he hastily went up to the window, and before she knew what he was about, had thrown the glass into the yard below, so that it broke with a crash.

"Good gracious!" said she; "what have you done?"

"I am keeping your birthday, Reginchen," he replied gaily, as he came back to her and seized one of her hands. "I wish to prove to you that I am not only strong, but that I am also rich enough to throw something out of the window. If one has a superfluity

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one can lack nothing. And now, good-bye, dear Reginchen; I hear your brother's voice downstairs. And to-night, when you go to bed very tired, recollect that it is a very good thing for less light-footed persons than yourself that you came into the world eighteen years ago."

Though he had told her to go, he held her hand so tight that she blushed more and more. Suddenly with a laughing movement she freed herself, and said, as she rapidly collected the dinner things—

"I will bring you back a nosegay of cornflowers if there are still any. Good-bye, Herr Walter, and thank you again *very* much for the beautiful present. Mother is right; you are the best man in the whole world!" Saying this, she ran out of the room.

He listened till the sound of her light steps could be heard no more. Then the shadow of a sad thought passed across his face. He opened a drawer which there was in the under part of his turning lathe, and took out a portfolio, containing scraps of paper, all written over with what looked like verses. He read and turned over for a while. Then he placed Reginchen's glass of red wine, which she had hardly touched, on the turning lathe, seated himself before it, and began to write a poem, from time to time taking a sip out of the glass.

A good hour passed in this manner; his delicate, almost feminine features grew brighter and brighter; now and then he threw back his thick light hair with a quick gesture, or looked out at the top of the acacia, on which the sun was shining, or at the little bit of blue sky which peeped at him over the roof. Joy and calmness and a heavenly purity shone more and more in his face the longer he wrote.

They tell me I am ill. It may be so;
It grieves me not, nor brings a sense of woe.
I see go past me now in the sunshine flitting
My life below,
As I upon the flower-deck'd bank am sitting.

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O softly murm'ring waves, O gentle air!
Wind, water, light—how tender is your care!
And in that oarless boat is now appearing
The child most fair.
She beckoneth, and past me now is steering.

The stars' lov'd glimmer
Is slowly waning,
Mine eyes grow dimmer
With upward straining;
But my heart's gladness
E'en pain and sadness
Can ne'er destroy.

Beauteous love
That shinest o'er me,
Thy sunlike glory
Dispels my gloom.
My life's pale flow'r through thy great pow'r—
Thou know'st it not—unfolds in bloom.

Then he rested for a bit, and scribbled with his pen a variety of flowers and branches between the verses, which he had written straight off, without striking out a word or hesitating for a rhyme. This was not for the sake of exercising himself in the art (on the contrary, he maintained that the real poet was Edwin, but that his pride would not allow him to shine), it was only another kind of soliloquy, and by writing down instead of merely repeating his improvisation he lengthened and increased his solitary enjoyment. He always had the keys of the drawer, where he kept his writings, about his person, and even Edwin, from whom he had usually no secrets, was not allowed to touch this buried treasure.

Now he took another sheet, and wrote as follows:—

Methinks that spirits
Each day progressing
To this pure blessing
Must happy be:

To share the feeling
Of all our brothers;
With love for others
Our heart-aches healing;

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Sure of the good
That in beauty has breath;
In the glow of life
At one with death.

Eagerly tracing
Truth's germs most hidden,
And boldly facing
Dark doubts unbidden.

The bosom swelling
At poesy's call,
An earthling dwelling
In peace with all.

Gladly unfolding
Where light is streaming;
Calmly beholding
Its bright rays beaming.

Methinks that spirits
Each day progressing
To this pure blessing
Must happy be.

* * * * *

But there are moments when the heart will fail,
And doubts like swarms of buzzing gnats assail;
My breath is labour'd, and life's stream once gay
Seems stagnant—soon it will be dry for aye.

I pause to question what is true and right.
Is bare existence full of such delight,
As 'gainst these cruel, bitter pains to weigh—
These aimless, fruitless strifes which mark each day?

Far, far from life's most high and noble joys,
Uncrownèd work the heart's best blood employs;
And if the weary child, to hasten time,
Should smash the lagging watch, were that a crime?

Oh death! But hark, a gladsome step draws near;
Bright eyes I see, a laughing voice I hear;
Now gaily beats my heart, so dead before,—
Whether I love my life I ask no more.

He sat for a while smiling to himself. Then his look became grave; he sighed, as if to get rid of some-

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thing that oppressed him, as if to free his heart from some heavy thought. On the sheet which was lying on his knee he drew with his pencil a profile which was unmistakably that of Edwin. The thought which occupied him seemed on the point of streaming forth in words, when he heard a well-known heavy step coming upstairs.

A slight shade of impatience crossed his brow, he hastily threw the portfolio into the drawer, which he carefully locked. Then he took out his work. But the visitor, who now entered with a melancholy "Good evening, Balder," saw only a friendly face in which he could not guess what an unwelcome interruption he had been to the stillness of the muses.

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CHAPTER X.

This visitor was an extraordinary-looking man of middle height, in coarse but tidy clothes like those of a workman when his work is done for the day. The figure was ill-formed, the broad face, surrounded by thick bright black hair and beard, seemed to suit the body as little as did the hands and feet. But the pale face, though it was without beauty, was rendered attractive by its expression of almost childlike true-heartedness, and when he overcame his habitual dejection enough to smile, his full red lips in parting disclosed beautiful white teeth from among the wilderness of black beard, and the eyes from beneath the thick brows shone with so soft and yet fiery a light that he might well have pleased a maiden. Except when in unusually low spirits, the honest fellow was in the habit of employing those eyes whenever he had the opportunity in gazing at Balder, for whom he nourished an enthusiastic, almost sentimental affection. He never expressed this in words, of which he was indeed always sparing; but even a casual observer would have been touched to see the power which the tender, sunny nature of the youth had over his bushy-haired, uncouth elder. It was a regular "*stille liebe,*"* which year by year had increased in strength and

* "Silent love;" probably an allusion to a well-known song.

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enthusiastic warmth, and for which no trial would have been too hard.

Everything that was wanting in his own nature and life in the way of grace and harmonious charm he found and loved in his beautiful, distinguished-looking friend, and had, as it were, proved himself disloyal to the other brother, who had older claims on his friendship.

The first time that Edwin had carried his satchel to school, he had been joined by a puny, shy little fellow who was going the same way, and to the same class. He was the seventh son of a small surgeon and accoucheur in that neighbourhood, Franzelius by name, who had great difficulty in making shift with his young family, but whose ambition it was that they should all study for learned professions. By means of scholarships and free tables he carried his point honestly and uprightly, and Edwin's parents did all they could to help by feeding Reinhold, the youngest, who became their son's daily companion. But Edwin, with all his patient efforts, had never succeeded completely in thawing his comrade's shyness. The poverty-stricken existence in his parents' house, where every penny was of consequence, seemed all the more oppressive to him when he had just left the table of well-to-do people. At an early age he began to meditate on the unequal division of earthly gifts, but without bitterness, for he needed little, and had no unappeasable longings for himself. But the anxiety in his parents' faces was always forcing on him the riddle, how these monstrous disproportions could have originated, and whether there were not some way of balancing them; and even as a boy, though he was good-hearted and unselfish, he could work himself into the most violent passion at the merest allusion to this his one idea. When in his Roman history he got to the agrarian laws, and the times of the Gracchi, he composed an essay in which with boyish vehemence

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he upheld the most revolutionary views, and gained for himself the nickname of "Franzelius Gracchus." Then the fate of the brothers dissolved this school friendship, and it was not till many years later that Edwin had again come across the companion of his boyhood, whom indeed he had half forgotten.

Outwardly he was much changed. The thin, shy lad had grown into a strong, black-bearded, defiant-looking youth, a figure whom well-bred, well-dressed exquisites would be rather inclined to avoid in the street, the more so when in winter he wound a large red shawl round his neck. In himself he was exactly as he used to be—clumsy, laconic, and gentle when in the company of a few; but no sooner did he get upon his own theme than his passionate eloquence carried everything before it. Edwin had now and then an opportunity in student circles of witnessing the boldness with which he would speak to a large meeting, though in a *tête-à-tête*, he could seldom finish his sentences, and in a hand-to-hand discussion was easily confused and silenced. His was the peculiar nature of the agitator, a mind full of passion and dogmatism, who loved to pour forth the few principal propositions of his faith in a deep chest voice, but who at the same time needed the echo of a devoutly attentive multitude. Then he was carried on, and upheld by that deeper water in which he felt himself at home, while out of the stream he was uncertain of himself, and, especially when confronted with Edwin's intellect and learning, was too modest to think of using his heavy rhetorical artillery.

However, it was not merely Edwin's superiority which had captivated him; other reasons led him to rejoice in a renewal of their intimacy. He had always felt as if a social gulf separated him from Edwin, who was the spoilt son of parents in easy circumstances; but now he found him depending on himself, living by his own work, and with surroundings as suitable for

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the proletariat as his own, and at this he secretly rejoiced, though he wished him heartily everything that was good. For it put an end to all distinctions between them, and placed him and his school friend on the same footing.

Finally, he was completely thawed when Balder (whom he had already known as a little boy, and of whom he had always made a great deal) also appeared before him with his turning trade, as a workman in his sense of the word. By his father's wish he had himself studied law, and had passed his first examination with credit. But no sooner had old Franzelius closed his eyes, than our Reinhold, with his old Gracchi scorn, deserted the career of a bureaucrat, apprenticed himself to a printer, and served his time. Now at last he was free from the chain which had oppressed his soul; he felt that he was in every respect on a level with his brothers in sorrow, the "working men," and he resolved to devote all his powers to the improvement of their lot.

At the university he had studied, perhaps somewhat capriciously, all sorts of subjects connected with political economy, so now, with this great end in view, he made it his business to write little pamphlets, in which he discussed what he considered questions of life and death for the people. These essays, of which the style was impetuous, and now and then truly that of the dilettante, imbued with the spirit of a Gracchus, he printed himself in his free hours, and distributed gratis among the "people," with whom he by degrees became a great authority. He used to show the brothers his firebrand treatises, as he called them, with which he made the Philistines (*i. e.* the bourgeois) tremble for their fields, and it was a great pleasure to him that Balder in his gentle way entered into it all, though often disagreeing with him, while Edwin accepted it all with a good-humoured joke, but would seldom discuss it seriously.

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He was really attached to the good fellow; he could still see him as he used to sit at table with his own beautiful mother, in the jacket which had been given him, helping himself with clumsy hands to the most modest bits on the dish. But Edwin's nature, turning as it did to intellectual questions, to their essence and their connection with each other, was totally inaccessible to a mind entrenched in dogmatism, as was that of our agitator, and he willingly avoided all fruitless discussion. All the same, he felt that something was wanting if at the accustomed time he did not see the honest, somewhat anxious face, which always provoked him to let off fireworks of banter and old school-boy jokes till the thick lips among the black bushy hair opened, the white teeth laughed forth, and the lines between the thick eyebrows disappeared. The dreamer of dark dreams could then sit at the brothers' table and share their frugal evening meal with as much childlike pleasure as if no social questions ever burnt into his very soul.

But to-day he seemed to be under an unusually thick cloud, and, contrary to custom, even Balder seemed incapable of cheering him. He had obviously a trouble, which he had his usual difficulty in expressing. He stumbled about the room, mopping his large brow with a bright-coloured pocket-handkerchief, and at last, lost in the deepest thought, stood still before the table, on which there were still the remnants of the Kuchen. Balder had invited him to taste it, begging him only to spare Edwin's piece, and had at the same time informed him that this wanton luxury was owing to the fact of its being a high feast day—Reginchen's birthday. Thereupon the strange fellow had grown completely dumb, had seated himself with a deep sigh at the table, and with his head leaning on his hands had given himself up with such abstraction to the consideration of the beautiful shining slices of Kuchen, that it was as if he sought therein the solution of the

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social problem, just as Jacob Böhmen discovered the great problem of existence in a tin dish. Balder had given up all attempt at conversation; he was accustomed to these attacks, and was not sorry to be able to continue his work and his own dreams.

And so Edwin found them when he returned home an hour later. It vexed him not to find Balder alone; he had longed to have his brother to himself, and to give vent to the feeling which oppressed him. He greeted his old friend monosyllabically, and passing his hand over Balder's hair, said—

"Have I been away long? I will only just look through the dissertation. You will excuse me, Franzel?"

With that he went to his desk, took out a printed number, and then in the quiet room the three men kept silence as persistently as the two had done before.

Who knows how soon they would have found the use of their tongues if Mohr, who had meantime found a lodging, had not reappeared to fetch his bag. He entered with the most cheerful face, which, however, fell when he recognized Franzelius. Formerly disagreeables had arisen between them, since which time they had carefully avoided one another. Their natures were necessarily antagonistic: Mohr, who confessed with naïve cynicism that he always thought of himself, and Reinhold, the friend of his kind, who *never* thought of himself, and sacrificed to his ideal even the little gratifications which he might have secured.

"Come," said Mohr, carelessly nodding to the young printer; "do I see old Bruin again? Well, how goes it with the welfare of mankind? I thought that since the foundation of artificial hatching establishments we had approached much nearer to the ideal of the chicken in the Sunday soup?"

"I—I cannot answer such a frivolous question," muttered the other in his beard.

"You are still the old fighting-cocks," laughed

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Edwin, as he closed his book. "Do me the favour, my boys, not to begin spluttering at once like fat and fire. In the winter these useless word battles may at all events help to keep us warm, but in such beautiful weather as it is to-day—"

"Hear, hear the wise man," exclaimed Mohr. "Well then, in order to honour the wonderful fact of a philosopher's having for once a sensible practical thought, I will swear to a truce for to-day. Come, let us smoke the cigar of peace in some public garden, for I am quite worn out with seeking an abode. However, I have found what I sought, a quiet, clean pot-house, only separated by ten houses from your 'tub,' with a single old lady, who in the very first half-hour related to me the history of three previous engagements to be married. So the day is now my own, and, without neglecting any duty to mankind, I can devote it to you and to my thirst. Where shall we go then? For the last three years I have not known where to turn for something fit to drink."

"He does not yet know the order of the house," said Edwin, glancing across at Balder. "You must know, Heinz, that it is our rule never to go out in the evening, to make up for which we remain at home all the more regularly at noon. Our stairs are too steep for Balder, and as when we open all our three windows we cannot complain of want of air——"

"Good heavens!" interrupted Mohr, in a tone of horror, which, warned by a look from Edwin, he immediately changed to one of fun. "Are you turned into oysters? Well, there are charms in a sedentary way of life, and the air in the 'tub' does not seem to be quite as dry as formerly. At all events the most beautiful Kuchen grows here, and in that corner I see a dozen red heads with which we can well pass a little time."

"A hamper of wine!" cried Edwin. "You don't mean that in spite of all I said——"

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"Marquard sent it; he would not be refused," said Balder. "And," added he, reddening, "as I felt a little faint, I opened a bottle."

"A little faint!" exclaimed Edwin, rising hastily and forgetting everything else. "Your old trouble again, or something new? Why did you not tell me about it before?"

"It was not worth mentioning, Edwin. But Marquard was quite right; I was better at once. The wine seems quite sound; you should——"

"All the better if it does you good; and you are right, I do not see why we should not enjoy our old comrade's wine. If we had it, and he needed it, it would be a matter of course."

Franzelius threw a glance of beaming satisfaction at him. One of his favourite theories, which he carried so far as to denude himself of absolute necessaries, was the voluntary holding of goods in common. Meantime Mohr had refilled Balder's glass from the half-finished bottle. He emptied it at a draught, refilled it, and offered it to Franzelius.

"Very drinkable," said he. "I drink to you, Franzelius Gracchus; let us to-day drown all desires for strife and murder, and let the happiness of the human race begin with us."

"Thank you," replied the printer. "I shall drink no wine so long as——"

"What? no wine? Then you are no true friend of the people. They are always thirsty. However, never mind. I will forgive Marquard his carriage and his haughty nod for the sake of his cellar. Though as man and doctor he may not be above mediocrity, yet his wine is excellent, a choice St. Julien."

"Where can our second glass be?" said Edwin, as he hunted about in the room. "We really do possess two, Heinrich, and when three topers meet for a bacchanalian feast——"

Balder's cheeks grew redder and redder, and he

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stooped as if to search for the missing glass on the floor.

"Why need we trouble ourselves about the vessel?" cried Mohr, who had meantime attacked the Kuchen, and was munching away with all his might. "The spirit is the principal thing, whether one sips it from the cask, the bottle, or a pot. My friends, allow me to tell you that this is the first good hour which those malicious sluts, the Fates, have granted me for the last three years. I am rejoiced to find myself at last among men who fare worse than they deserve. That is just the case with you two and with myself. As regards our tribune of the people, he has any way a face on which the sting of envy will blunt itself. The devil take me, Franzel, but you look as if things were going ill with you. Did Schulze-Delitzsch pass you to-day without taking off his hat? Have a dozen blood-thirsty millionnaires sprung from the ground since the last rain? Or in the last meeting of the working men, did they call upon you not for fine speeches, but to act for once like the pelican, and to rip up your breast with your bill in order to let a stream of pure St. Julien pour forth, and you were not capable of performing this trick for their benefit?"

"I see that I am only in the way here," answered the printer, with a glance of indescribable contempt at Mohr. "I will trouble you no longer."

He got as far as the door, after nodding to Balder, but there he was held fast by Edwin.

"Stop," said he, "we are not going to let you go like this. Mohr is incorrigible. But something *is* the matter with you, Franzel; I see it in your face, and for the sake of our old friendship——"

Franzelius only compressed his lips sullenly, and said, after a considerable time—

"What is the good of talking? If ruin must come, it must."

"Ruin?"

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"Well, yes; a little later, a little earlier, what does it signify? And after all it is better that the cause should be what it is. It proves in the clearest manner to what a pass things have come in our state organism, and what they will still come to, supposing that——"

He hesitated again; the friends looked at one another inquiringly.

"If I am one too many here," said Mohr phlegmatically, as he rose and seized the bottle, "I have no objection to drinking these dregs out in the garden."

"I have no secrets," murmured Franzelius, gloomily. "That which has happened has happened openly; the consequences are still afraid of the light, but they will be proclaimed on the housetops soon enough. A cry of horror will go through Germany when it is known that to-day, in the light of the nineteenth century—"

"At all events, my friend," interrupted Edwin, "the nineteenth century has abolished torture, and for the last quarter of an hour you have been torturing us with thumbscrews of curiosity. Out with it. What *has* happened? and *what* consequences are afraid of the light?"

"Well, if you wish to know, yesterday I was at the working men's education association." (Mohr coughed, winked at Edwin, and then sipped his wine with great satisfaction.) "There was to be a lecture on the nature and value of education in general, but the lecturer had fallen ill, and had written to say he could not come. As we were discussing what to do next, a stranger, who had just entered, and whom nobody knew, rose and asked whether the meeting would allow him to say a few words; he had an unpleasant, half humble, half jesuitical face. He could not be refused, and so he began at once to preach the old story, but with an astounding impudence exceeding even what one might have expected from his clerical appearance. Education? a dangerous thing! at all events in the way that the children of this world

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understand it. The devil, who as a lion goes about seeking whom he may devour, is a very well-educated man, full of the mania of modern enlightenment. His motto is: Education is freedom, and knowledge governs the world. Yes, indeed, the world! So spake the tempter to our Lord: If thou wilt fall down and worship me, all this power will I give thee! But *my* kingdom is not of this world, etc., etc., the well-known cant. True education, he continued, will have nothing to do with the so-called treasures of the world, which moths and rust corrupt. He who educates himself for heaven, let him only care for the one thing needful. Well, you will dispense with the remainder of the sermon. When it was over the good fellows sat as if struck dumb with lightning, the old habits of their childhood were too strong for them—in church no discussion; and the chairman even seemed to think that it would not do to find fault with a guest. Good heavens! the man had attacked the very essence of our association in the most revolting manner, and we were to hold our tongues? So I burst forth. The spirit seemed to move me, and it is, moreover, a subject which I had considered long and deeply. It did me real good to be able for once, face to face with the whole association, to go to the root of the text, 'Just try and despise reason and science.' Well, with you I need waste no words about that; I will only say that never did I so clearly see as at that moment what a crime against men it is to spoil their life in this world in order to prepare them for a so-called heaven. I am the last man in the world to be satisfied with doctrines of mere expediency, with empty Manchesterism. With these people the means become the end, and if they were to succeed in arranging the world as they list, who would care to live in it that had any higher object in life than to eat their fill and to know the multiplication table by heart? But just because there are higher things,

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earthly joys in abundance, intellectual enjoyments, art, poetry, and all those splendid things—you know what I mean, and may well believe how rage against these destroyers of earthly happiness loosened my tongue. Meantime the enemy to education, the lessee of heaven, had turned red and pale, and when I finished, and there was a loud outcry of agreement, while everybody shook hands, he wanted to reply; but this time the president would not allow him to speak a word, so he withdrew silently and without being noticed.

"'Ah,' thought I, 'he has had enough.' I alone had not, and on the way home I made up my mind to write a pamphlet, in which I intended to prove historically the unutterable mischief which has been done to the world by a belief in immortality. And indeed last night I did sit down and write a few sheets, but merely as a sketch, for I was too excited to grasp the subject properly; the retort must not be shaken if you want anything to crystallize. But it seems I am to have plenty of leisure for that; for when I went home to-day at noon, I was told by my landlord the joiner that the police had been there, had inquired all about me, and had written it down. As he said it, the man made a face as much as to say: 'Six weeks' confinement till the crime is proved, and then over the border.' He is quite right; I know whom I have to do with. I have long been watched as suspicious, though they could not take hold of me. Now the parsons will look in through the shutters, and then good night. And as I have no idea of lying down and leaving my place empty, I shall prefer in the mean time not to seek my usual bed, but to try once more how one sleeps in the open air."

"With your Gracchi conscience as a soft pillow under your head," cried Mohr, offering him a full glass. "You ought to live, noble mortal, till they hang the last millionnaire by the guts of the last

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parson, and that will not happen before the death of the everlasting Jew."

"Your scorn does not hurt me," answered the printer, with vehemence. "There are people to whom all questions connected with humanity are but jests, and to whom nothing is serious save their own precious selves."

"And why should that not be so, thou preacher in the wilderness? Charity begins at home. Before the education of my precious self is completed where shall I find time or courage to care for my other self, my not self, or even for that very questionable humanity self? Those things are too hard, my good friend, for you to mend with a pen, even though it be skilfully used, and therefore I wish you a very long life, that at at all events you may have leisure to study the subject."

Franzelius glanced compassionately at him.

"Selfishness is in the habit of entrenching itself behind a hypocritical modesty in this way," he muttered. "If nobody desired or did anything better till he knew the best, we should now be living in wooden huts. And must an idea for which our holiest instincts speak, which cannot yet be proved mathematically—if so the world would come to an end—for the smallest idea as soon as it concerns the whole human race—— Edwin will understand what I mean."

"God understands you, and that will be enough for you; look at Sancho Panza for the quotation," laughed Mohr.

"What do you think of doing now, Franzel?" broke in Edwin, who had been sitting all this time on the window-seat stroking Balder's cat.

"That is of no importance. Tell me first whether you approve of what I have done?"

"Can you undo it?"

"As if I would take it back! But you know I do care that we three at least, even if others think differently——"

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He faltered, and looked almost anxiously at Edwin.

"My opinions," answered Edwin, "are no secret to you. I am myself perfectly convinced of many truths which I should hesitate to put before men who are complete strangers to me. But what is the use of talking? It will not prevent your doing what you cannot leave undone, and as you have excessive ideas of the equality of men, even as regards their capability of thinking—"

"He who does not work for all works for none, or for himself alone."

"Forgive me; but this conclusion is false. You yourself will not deny that the division of labour is a useful institution. Well, one may begin from below, another from above. If I convince ten of the best men, and make some of the hardest problems a little bit clearer to them, will not what I have done benefit the others in time? There is just as much variety in the gifts of men as in their ambition."

Franzelius was on the point of replying, but with an obvious effort he turned to Balder, saying—

"And you, Balder, is it your opinion too that I am only actuated by the insensate ambition of letting my little light shine before men?"

"You have misunderstood Edwin," said the youth, limping up to him, and gently loosening his grasp of the door-handle. "We all know that you never think of yourself in these matters. But he means that it would be better for the *cause* if you had a little more patience. All fruits do not ripen together. Come, do not let us part like this."

"But tell me, could you have been silent under such provocation?"

"Hush!" cried Mohr aloud. "Don't you hear?" Then, as if talking to himself, he added almost inaudibly, "That is enough to tame wild beasts and social democrats. Ye gods! how the woman plays!"

The four men in this room were now so still that not a note of the improvisation which sounded up to

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them from below was lost. Franzelius had thrown himself on to the chair by the bed on which Balder was sitting, with his lame leg crossed over his sound one. Edwin sat on the window-seat; Mohr supported his head in his hands over his glass, and groaned from time to time with enthusiasm. When the music ceased he rose.

"My friends," said he, "it would, I think, be right by ourselves to offer a token of our respect to this lady. I shall go down and invite her to join us in drinking a modest glass of wine to her health."

"Are you mad, Mohr?" laughed Edwin. "She is a most respectable person, and would think that your head was affected by more glasses of wine than was good for your senses."

Mohr looked at him with comical dignity, compressing his under-lip more than ever.

"She is an artist," he said, "and no common Philistine. Here are four of us who are friends to art. I magnanimously include you, Franzel, because at all events you held your tongue while she played, though I dare say your head was running all the time on your social dissonances. I wager that she will consider it an honour, a pleasure. Give me a respectable hat; no, I will go bareheaded, as if I belonged to the house. I shall be more at my ease."

"And you have the face to do it! Well, then I must request you to bring at the same time a glass for this carousal."

"She will drink out of mine," replied Mohr from the door. "I don't care if she does guess my thoughts."

They heard him go downstairs and ring at the bell below.

"He really is doing it!" said Balder, rising quickly. "What will she think of us?"

Franzelius rose too. "I will go away," said he. "I have not self-command enough to stand all Mohr's

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jokes and wit, especially in the society of a lady. Shall I constantly meet him here? In that case I would rather go away for a time, till—till you also have had enough of a man who takes nothing in earnest."

"You are unjust to him," answered Edwin. "Fire and water are two elements that are thoroughly in earnest, only that the one accomplishes its ends, be they to destroy, or be they to give life, with heat, and the other with cold."

"Hum! To be frozen! Good-bye."

"And where will you pass the night?" asked Balder.

"There are plenty of seats in the Thiergarten."

"I would not let you go, Franzel," whispered Balder to him on the threshold; "you have often camped out here. But—Edwin sleeps so badly now, the least thing disturbs him."

"Thank you, Balder. Don't be anxious about me. Good night!"

They heard him descend the stairs, and immediately afterwards Mohr came up slowly. He re-entered with a very red face, but appeared quite composed.

"So the friend of the human race has departed. I am afraid I have sent him away. I am sorry he has taken it into his head that I can't abide him. He is very much mistaken, for indeed I do him the honour to envy him."

"For what?"

"Because he is not only possessed with this persecution mania, which makes a man just as happy as if he fancies himself a genius misunderstood, but also because he has a demon which drives him about, which speaks forth from him, which has its seat in the very kernel of his being, and keeps him warm, while I am nothing but an old shell with no kernel, no fruit. Faugh!"

"And our artist?" inquired Edwin, after a pause. "Did she refuse both the honour and the pleasure?"

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"It is late," returned Mohr, looking at his watch; "too late to open another bottle if you won't join in it. I shall seek my solitary couch."

"He evades us," laughed Edwin, turning to Balder. "He has been disappointed in his expectation. Yes, Heinz, I could have told you so beforehand. Our muse is no beauty. The tips of her fingers seem to promise more than is fulfilled in her features."

"You talk according to your lights, philosopher," answered Mohr, seizing his hat. "Whatever she may be, and however she may look, she is a regular trump."

"Was this sufficiently proved to you in three minutes?"

"Apparently. At all events, it was again proved that I cannot succeed thoroughly in anything, and even in a miserable attempt of this kind I cannot get more than half way; it really is discouraging. Good night!"

When he was gone, and the brothers were at last alone, Edwin related all the day's occurrences. Balder also had much which he might have confessed, but not one word of the birthday feast passed his lips, and yet he was silently reproaching himself bitterly that he should have a secret from his brother.

This night they fell asleep earlier, though Balder waited till the closing of a well-known little window in the front house told him that the birthday heroine had returned safe from her expedition. A few of the verses which he had written in the afternoon were running in his head, and saying them softly to himself, he soothed himself to sleep with his own music.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE next morning when Marquard visited his patients in the "tub," he found everything restored to its usual course in the house. In spite of the late hour at which she had returned from her expedition into the country, Reginchen had been at the pump by six o'clock, had carried the blue milk up to the brothers an hour later, and had put the room tidy without talking; for though Edwin was always most friendly with her, yet she had so much veneration for him that his harmless jests always confused her. The brothers also had begun their day in silence, and so the doctor found them. Balder was seated at his lathe, busy with some ivory chessmen. Marquard chatted with them for a long time, seemingly unconcerned, asked about this and that, felt his pulse without prescribing anything, except that he was to continue drinking the wine. But on the stairs, when Edwin went out with him, he turned round suddenly, and said in a low tone—

"Look here, it must not go on like this with that boy. All that stooping and staying at home will never do. He is ruining his chest at that confounded lathe. If I were in your place I would use my authority."

"In my place?" sighed Edwin, shrugging his

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shoulders. "My dear fellow, if you were in my place, that is to say, if you were a philosopher instead of a doctor, you would know that no authority can change the inmost nature of a man. Have I not tried by every means to get him out? I attacked him on his weakest, I should rather say, his strongest side, that of his affection for me, telling him how wretched it was for me all alone out there. You should have seen his struggles to play the jolly comrade, and to cheer me up, when we went out either driving or walking. But I know him too well. I saw how he suffered in the noise and bustle of the streets; even when we once drove to Tegel, he was only happy on the road while we were by ourselves. There we found a crowd of romping girls, numerous knitting mothers and aunts, a few pairs of lovers, in short, regular Berlin pleasure-seekers. The only thing he thought of was to get back as soon as possible. Indeed he cannot bear to be stared at, as so often happens; his lameness and his beauty always attract attention—besides, he looks like nobody else."

"I wish he were more like other people; we should keep him longer."

Edwin stood still, and seized Marquard's arm while he whispered, "You fear——"

"Nothing, and yet everything. He is of a most fragile texture—a fly would suffice to tear it. But very possibly it is tougher than we think," he added, as he felt Edwin's hand tremble on his arm.

"The wine which you sent did him good," said the latter. "I thank you; it was a good, kind thought. I can hardly make up my mind to wish him different from what he is. He would no longer be *the one* only man he is if he possessed muscles and nerves like those of a groom. And would he be any happier? For you cannot think *how* happy he is, or what a wonderful faculty he possesses of glorifying, out of the abundance of his heart, all the poverty which sur-

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rounds us—of changing common dust into gold. If I were not just now rather an anxiety to him, he would have hardly anything to wish for!"

"As regards you, philosopher, I have also a word to say. I hinted what I thought up there in your room, but Balder was present, and he is just like a girl; there are certain things which one must not call by their names in his presence. Listen, friend; all this nervous suffering is caused by your own fault; it is a sin and a shame that you should allow your brain, this parasitical growth, to exhaust the best juices of the rest of the system. How can you expect that there should be an equal balance of all the forces if you act in this manner? Item, I tell you plainly, your troubles can only be cured in one way."

"You may be right, Fritz," answered Edwin quietly, as they crossed the yard; "but don't you see you prescribe for me as you have just done for Balder. It is not our nature to do as you say, and if we were to force ourselves to obey you, the evil would but attack the best parts of us."

"Nature! nature!" burst out the doctor, looking almost fiercely at his friend through his gold spectacles. "I will answer for it, my boy, that your sound nature, though you have tormented it so long with your cursed transcendental idealism, would not take long to recover itself, if only you would dismount from your high horse of speculation, and would consent to come to your five senses. Good God! a fellow like you to live like a hermit in the Theban wilderness on locusts and wild honey, and to cry, 'Apage, Satanus!' should a female figure pass your hole. Even at the university I had trouble with you. It seems to me that this will go on till, by foolishly ill-using your constitution, there will be nothing left but intellect."

"That is really a pretty pathological lecture," said Edwin, smiling. "Later on I shall beg for the continuation of it; it will be sure to teach me something.

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But in spite of all this, Fritz, I shall never owe you a *küppelpelz.*" *

"Nonsense! who thinks of such a thing? But if I, with a practice which increases daily, find time to act little romances in which the intellect plays a part as well——"

"Surely the heart also?"

"Well, as far as I am concerned, the heart also, though this organ has been made a great deal too much of, and in your case all your sentimentalisms will only lead to dangerous hypertrophy of it. I am just now on the track of a little witch."

"A beautiful Helen, or Galatea?"

"Much more distinguished, and unfortunately quite unapproachable as yet. But what was I thinking of? You must already have made her acquaintance."

"I?"

"Did you not sit by her in the box only the day before yesterday? Any way the box-keeper told me that she always sat in the same place."

Edwin turned quite pale.

"I have a kind of recollection," said he. "Did she not sit quite in front? Brown hair, very pale complexion, blue eyes——"

"Black or brown, however, we can only mean the same; and I, noble as I am, will give up all my claims to you."

"Then you must at least give up your carriage too, in order that I may carry on the courtship conformably to her rank," said Edwin, with a constrained smile; "for it will hardly do to pay court to a princess as a *privat docent.*"

"Be without anxiety. Indeed I am not yet quite at home with the will o' the wisp, for she defeated all my skilful efforts at conversation; but however royally she may wrinkle up a nose—which by the way is a nose to rave about—things are by no means all right

* Reward given to a person who has brought about a match.

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with her. Young ladies who go alone in this way to the theatre will probably find their friends at home afterwards. But I am determined to discover where this bird of Paradise has her nest. Yesterday my purpose of following the proud little nose was unluckily frustrated by an old privy counsellor's consulting me about his liver. If it is as I expect, you shall see what a base materialist is capable of for the sake of his friends."

He laughed and sprang into his light carriage, and taking the reins out of the hands of his groom, drove rapidly away.

Edwin looked after him; he could not be offended. Had he not himself only the day before weighed possibilities, and struggled with impressions which had been quite as unfavourable to this mysterious being? At the same time, to hear it mentioned by another as a matter about which there could be no doubt caused him almost physical pain.

He had two volumes of his Goethe with him, which he meant to take to her. Now he thought that it would perhaps be wiser to avoid her house, her vicinity, and all further intercourse with her. But only a moment later her face rose up before him, her voice sounded in his ears, and all hesitation was at an end.

Supposing it should turn out that appearances only were against her? What would she then think of the extraordinary man who, after intruding on her so pertinaciously, had not shown his face again.

However, he made up his mind not to see her that day at all events, so he only gave the books to the striped waistcoat who opened the door to him, and, on the boy's inquiring whether he wished to be shown in, he replied dryly that it was not necessary, that he would bring the rest of the books towards the end of the week. As he went down the steps he felt proud of his firmness, and resolved not to look back at her

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windows from the street; but this was too much for his resolution. He remained standing opposite on the shady side, as if uncertain which way he should turn, and let his eyes wander as if accidentally to the window with the palms, and then to the other with the gilt bird-cage, and he fancied he saw something move behind the blind which was down. The thought that it might be a man's head was like a hot iron through his soul. He pressed his hand over his eyes, and went on his way.

He had promised the day before to begin to-day the course of private lessons on the lagoon. As he mechanically turned his steps thitherwards it appeared impossible that he should deliver himself of any connected thoughts. Indeed his acquaintance with the little painter and his daughter seemed quite a thing of the past, as if months had gone by since he had seen them, and they were as indifferent to him as the people in the street. He resolved to call merely to excuse himself for to-day, if he could not—as he should like—give up the engagement altogether.

But the reception he met with at the little house brought all his intentions to nothing. The little painter in his worn velvet coat, with the little cap pushed jauntily over his left ear, was standing in the doorway, and called out, as he saw Edwin in the distance coming towards him between the piles of wood—

"Here he is! here he is!" Then he rushed to meet him, seized his hand with both his own, and said, "There! I have won my bet, and a regular triumph over my clever child, that for once she should have shown herself less clever than her old father."

"What did you bet about?" inquired Edwin.

"Whether you would come or not. Lea believed that you had only promised because you did not quite like to tell her to her face that you would not teach so ignorant a pupil. Though you were so very kind, you

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looked at everything in such a superior way—you seemed so absent, and as it were tired."

"My good sir," interrupted Edwin, "your daughter was so sharp-sighted that she certainly deserves to win her wager. I *am* rather tired and absent; my head is revenging itself on me because I have worked it too hard, and it will not recover at once from the strain. Honestly, if it were not just you and your daughter, it would perhaps be wiser to put off our lesson until I am quite myself; but if you will put up with——"

"Lea, Lea," cried the little man, running into the house. "Where are you hiding?"

The girl came out of the studio, wearing the same simple brown gown that she had worn on the previous day. Her black eyes greeted Edwin with a quiet, half-surprised look.

"I hear, Fräulein," said he, jokingly, "that you have lost a bet on my account. You believed that I should not return, and as one usually believes what one wishes——"

She looked at him as if to implore him to spare her confusion.

"It is true," said she, with a blush; "afterwards I did grow frightened at the thought of confessing to any one *how* ignorant and confused I am; I could hardly sleep for anxiety."

"Well, we must make haste to put you at your ease," said he, smiling. "I will bet anything that you will sleep soundly to-night."

"Do you know *what* we wagered?" cried the painter, cheerfully rubbing his hands together. "The loser was to paint something for you, and you may be very glad that you are to get something of Lea's instead of one of my miserable daubs. This is the reward of virtue."

They had entered the studio, which looked much tidier to-day. Instead of the desk with the painting

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materials, a little table with writing things and a portfolio had been placed in Lea's window. A nosegay of fresh flowers stood on the window-seat, tall dahlias and bright-coloured china asters, as if to make up for the dull grey of the bare walls opposite.

"We have been thinking that you would be less disturbed here than opposite in the sitting-room, so close to the noise of the kitchen. There, so the poor Zaunkönig is turned out of the nest by his undutiful offspring," said Herr König, stroking his daughter's cheek softly. "Believe me, it may be bad enough with spoilt children, but the true tyrants are the good ones who have been well brought up. It is indeed regular slavery, worse than being henpecked by a wife. Good-bye, my child; be industrious. I will meantime work at my study behind in the stable, which I have been thinking of so long. The light is just right."

He kissed her forehead, and then left the master alone with his pupil.

When he returned, an hour later, he heard Edwin's deep, full voice. He would have given anything to listen for a moment to know what they were talking about; but it was repugnant to his feeling of delicacy, and he hoped to hear afterwards from the girl how the lesson had gone off.

Edwin rose as the little man entered.

"Have I stayed too long? I hope Fräulein Lea will bear witness that I have not tired her."

Lea said nothing; she stood before the little table as if she were waking from a dream, and still felt doubtful of her whereabouts. The portfolio which lay before her had not been opened, nor the pen dipped into the ink.

Edwin asked whether he might not see the study.

"No, no," replied the little man, hastily; "my sketches are only for myself, and to-day I have worked more with my eyes than with my hands. I

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will, however, confess to you," added he, smiling mysteriously, "that I am going to venture rather out of my depth. I have long wished to make a picture of our lagoon. You would hardly believe the charming effects of colour which are sometimes to be seen on the muddy, unsavoury little canal; of course in certain lights. Well, I have now thought out the right foreground, which will indeed be the chief part of the picture; the water itself will be a more difficult matter for me. A week ago they carried off a stack of wood which had stood there for years exactly in my way, for it concealed my view of the wall and quay. And only look! it has opened up a paling on which there are the most beautiful creepers growing wild; it needs little or no composition on my part. If I succeed, it will perhaps be my best picture, and perhaps form the commencement of a new epoch in my development."

He rubbed his hands gleefully, and went up to his daughter.

"I hope, my child," said he, "that you have not become so learned a woman as to forget to offer the doctor some refreshment. What! you really have forgotten it! Well, I will at once. We have a bottle of good old port in the house—a present from our excellent friend the professorin. By the bye, my dear doctor, I wanted to ask you something. Will you do me the favour of calling on this lady? We owe her so much gratitude for the part she has taken in the education of my Lea, and she was just a little hurt that I should have engaged a master for the child without having first introduced him to her. She is the best woman in the world, and in some things, such as church history and theology, extraordinarily learned. You will not mind going such a little way—she lives in Louisenstrasse—and if I might accompany you——"

"With pleasure, Herr König," answered Edwin.

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"But let me first make acquaintance with the giver before I taste of her gifts. Fräulein Lea has learnt to-day that a Greek philosopher used to teach that the world had originally been water; for to-day, therefore, I will only ask for a glass of water. The next time we will see if truth is to be found in wine."

Lea brought the glass of water, but she was so silent that her father, just as he was going, asked anxiously whether she felt quite well.

"Never better," she answered, with a radiant glance from her beautiful peaceful eyes.

Shaking his head, the little man went out with Edwin, who took leave of his pupil with a friendly shake of the hand.

"Doctor," said he, outside, "is it not strange that a father should not be able to understand his own daughter? Truly each new man is a new wonder of God's. It is quite otherwise with our other productions, which are only just a reproduction of our own natures, and which make our own selves, our power or our impotence, clear to us. Only with the great masters is it perhaps a little the same, for something new has been brought forth by the breath of divine art which resembles nothing human, and astonishes even the artist. I fancy that when the Madonna di san Sisto was finished and stood before Raphael, he would hardly understand her better than I do my daughter. Yes, indeed, my friend, these are wonderful mysteries; one can only pray and give thanks that one has been blessed with the sight of them."

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CHAPTER XII.

PROFESSORIN VALENTIN lived in a pretty new house in large neat rooms, which, however, despite the neatness of their furniture, would hardly have satisfied an artistic eye. She received Edwin in the largest and barest of all; the little painter had not come in with him; he had to carry some blocks to a customer. The dignified, fair-haired woman, who some years previously must have been strikingly pretty, and who even now that she was between forty and fifty looked quite youthful, especially when she smiled (her eyes were so bright and her teeth were so white), was sitting in the midst of five or six sempstresses, among mountains of cotton and linen which she was cutting up for children's clothes and shirts. She greeted her visitor as if he were expected, and led him into a smaller room adjoining, where she was, as she said, really "at home"—with a writing-table, book-case, stand of flowers, and all her own peculiar belongings. Over the sofa hung the portrait of a hypochondriacal-looking man with grey hair. It was easy to read on the furrowed brow and compressed lips that the original had during his life been more taken up with the care of his digestion than of anything else.

"My late husband," said the professorin, presenting

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Edwin and the portrait to one another. "I have been a widow for the last ten years. But you see everything here just as it used to be in his lifetime; this" (continued she, opening a door to let Edwin look through) "is his study, with his whole library, though I cannot read one of his books, as he was a mathematician. But he loved them and was proud of them, and I believe the picture there would fall from the wall if they were to come into strange hands. As far as I am concerned, I should be only too glad to see the last of all these horrid books. I am sure while they were still useful to him they cost me tears enough."

"Tears!"

"Ah, Herr Doctor, you are a learned man too, but I hope you will never act as my late husband used to do; I hope you will never say: 'First my books, and then my wife.' And yet it was love, and not mathematics, which made him marry me. But only two or three years later, though I really had not grown uglier, he found these horrible triangles, and hexagons, and the odious plus and minus hieroglyphics much more attractive than the blue eyes and round cheeks of his young wife. Well, I am not complaining; I had expected it, and knew what I was about."

"Except for this jealousy, which is the lot of many women, you must have enjoyed a great deal of happiness in this room, or you would not so religiously keep everything just as it used to be."

The widow cast a searching side-look at him, as if first to convince herself that he was not too young to confide in. His good face, his open, firm bearing, which was entirely without presumption, seemed to please her. He was so very different from other young men of science or letters whom she had been accustomed to see going in and out during her husband's lifetime. Her quick woman's eyes told her at once that it was no ordinary man who was standing

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before her, but that he was indeed wise as the serpent, harmless as the dove.

"You are still young, Herr Doctor," replied she, without irony. "I do not know whether you have yet discovered that certain natures are an exception to the general rule, and that instead of running after happiness they prefer to seek their own mortification. Though I was still very young when my husband courted me, I was sharp enough to know very well that I should not find what one calls happiness with him. A being who can make others happy must be capable of happiness himself. Now my poor Valentin was the most miserable self-tormentor that can be imagined, so, without either knowing it or wishing it, he tormented everybody about him. I could reckon on it then with the same mathematical certainty that I now feel in telling you of it, and yet I preferred him to all others; for through him I gained what my nature requires—a constant, daily, hourly struggle with myself. I am very energetic, and must always have some difficulty to overcome. And there is nothing so difficult to overcome as oneself. I was indeed a spoilt, pampered thing; everybody made much of me. I coquetted with young and old, with my own heart, nay, God forgive me! with God Himself. It would be too long to tell you how my eyes were suddenly opened, and how I said to myself: You are a fool, you will ruin your immortal soul. It is enough that, possessing honesty and resolution, I made up my mind to try a really disagreeable and unhappy husband. It will hardly be an indiscretion if I confess to you that I was also being courted at the same time by my old friend König. We often tease each other by saying that I was his first love. When you know this man better, you will certainly agree with me that there could not be a happier man, or a more loving, Christian spirit. If I had been his wife my home would have been a Paradise. But that was repugnant

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to me; I felt that I should have ended by becoming superficial and vain, through being over-rated all my life by such a man. Well, with Valentin I had perhaps more of the contrary than was sometimes pleasant, yet I never repented it. And now seat yourself by me, Herr Doctor, and tell me a little about my adopted child Lea."

"*I* tell *you*, Frau Valentin? On the contrary, it would interest me deeply to learn from *you* something about my pupil, who seems very reserved—about her youth and early education."

A troubled smile altered Frau Valentin's good-humoured, cheerful face.

"If I could answer you thoroughly, satisfactorily, you would hardly be sitting by me now," she said. "But excuse me a minute; I am wanted within."

One of the workwomen had opened the door, as if to ask a question. The professorin left Edwin, and he heard her giving orders in the next room in her clear, decided manner. Then she came back to him.

"My hands are always full," said she. "As, unfortunately, I have no longer any domestic duties, I let the societies and institutions in which I am interested put all the work on me which is evaded by others. Ah! it is a great pleasure when a number of deaf and dumb or orphan children thank one for new warm clothes; but a single child of one's own, who need be neither deaf and dumb nor an orphan, and perhaps not particularly grateful, would be quite another kind of happiness. Substitutes are after all not the real thing, and so what really troubles me is that the one child whom I could love as my very own should shrink from me so strangely; not that she does not love me, or is ungrateful, but that I know nothing of the best that may be in her, neither can I give her of the best that is in me, for she does not know how to meet me."

"You are speaking of my pupil?"

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The professorin did not answer at once; she sat still, looking before her, with her pretty white hands folded in her lap.

"No human being has ever caused me such grief," she continued at last, "and yet she is full of goodness, of amiability, of unselfishness, and of real power; that is just it—the only thing that is necessary is wanting. You are a philosopher, Herr Doctor, but I hope not one of those who have sacrificed their faith to science. And this curious girl, it is not intellectual vanity that has troubled her faith; no one can think more humbly of her own insufficiency than she does. But it runs in the blood. You should have known her mother, whose temperament she inherits exactly. Nothing has ever puzzled me more than that my old friend the painter, who has such a lively need of his God, should have been happy with this woman. She did not try to conceal that she was without religion, and once, on my speaking to her about it, openly confessed to me that she did not even know whether there were a God. She did not deny that there might be, but He had not revealed Himself to her. Whether she confessed as much to her husband I really do not know; but I almost think that if she had it would have made no difference, he would only have loved her all the more. And indeed one could not help loving her; I could not, even after I had long given up the hope of showing her the way to that Light which had guided me through all the depths and shallows of this world. Her being a Jewess was naturally an impediment to her arriving at the truth, but she was not even a consistent Jewess! I always respect honest conviction, but she confessed to me with the calmest face that she knew nothing more of the mysteries of life in her thirtieth year than she had done in her tenth; that she understood neither this world nor the next, and that she had no longing to fathom it all; that she was quite satisfied with her beautiful, thought-

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less, loving present, with her husband and child. I was quite frightened when that came out so openly for the first time. What then is the miserable twilight of our earthly existence unless it be lighted and warmed by the heavenly beam till we reach at last the full light of heaven? And yet hers was no superficial or sensual nature, or how could she have lived and respected this delicate-minded man so deeply? In spite of everything, however, they were totally strange to one another, and remained so all through her life; but perhaps this only increased their mutual attachment. Maybe after all there was in her a secret yearning after the peace of the children of God, and in him something of redeeming grace which will not give up the most hardened heart, or grow weary of seeking the lost ones. With all this she was far from despising or scorning what is sacred to other people, and she took it as a matter of course that her child should be educated in her father's religion. Naturally, as she had none, and must at times have felt the horror of such a blank, she would not sin against her daughter. But it was of no use—blood is too strong; and I fear that were we to question the daughter, we should find that she had retained but little of her catechism, as little as her mother before her."

The door-bell which sounded at this moment interrupted the conversation.

"How unfortunate!" said the lady, quickly drying her eyes. "I begged you to come and see me because, as I have told you, I love the child almost as much as if she were my own. You must tell me, dear doctor, what you are going to do with her, so that I may be satisfied that you are not likely to increase the evil."

"I am not giving her religious instruction," said Edwin, as he rose. "I am no theologian myself, but the philosophy which occupies me has quite as often

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been the means of leading people to a personal God as from Him. No knowledge can replace or destroy those needs of the soul from which all religions spring. Even my psychology may very well leave what theologians call predestination to its honours, and I am the last who would wish to lead any one away from the path in which they hope to find peace, though it is certainly not my office to meddle with the missionary's trade."

She looked searchingly at him as he said these last words.

"I do not quite understand you," said she, holding out her hand, "but this much I do know: you are a good, earnest man, who cannot do the child any harm, for that can only spring from what is wrong."

At this moment a maid-servant entered and announced—

"Herr Candidate Lorinser!"

"That is good!" exclaimed the lady; then, turning again to Edwin, "You really must stay a little longer, to make an acquaintance which will be far more interesting to you than that of an old woman who only hopes to be as good a Christian as thousands of others."

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CHAPTER XIII.

"Do not let your first impression prejudice you," added she, in a low voice. "I found a good deal to get over at first, but all trees have not the same bark. The gifts of this man are not on the surface."

He for whom Edwin was thus prepared now entered with a slight bow; he threw a rapid glance of peculiar sharpness at Edwin, and then kissed the professorin's hand, very much as a clumsy boy might do who tried to behave for the first time like a grown man. When she introduced Edwin to him he bowed with studied politeness, but then, as if totally exhausted, threw himself on the sofa, and took no further notice of his new acquaintance. On the contrary, as if he were quite at home, he began to undo a narrow black cravat which was round his thick neck, and to sip with obvious satisfaction a glass of southern wine which his hostess poured out for him, talking all the time, without troubling to raise his voice, in unmelodious accents, of the numerous errands and commissions which in spite of the noontide heat he had been executing for Frau Valentin.

Edwin had leisure to observe him. The warning not to allow himself to be frightened by first impressions appeared to him to have been quite called for. If he had followed his own inclination he would not

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have remained a minute to breathe the same air as this strange-looking man. But now he did not move, and resolved to study him. Any one who looked more closely at the strongly-formed brow, the broad nose, the large, mobile, quivering mouth, must have felt that it was a remarkable face, and, in the rare moments of its remaining still, almost attractive. Bushy, unkempt hair hung over the arched temples, the beard was carefully shorn, leaving the cheeks tinged with blue. But what repelled Edwin the most was that the candidate always kept his eyes fixed on the ground, or let them wander aimlessly about the ceiling, only glancing with short side-looks at any one who might be present. Moreover, when he was silent, a bitter smile seemed constantly to play in the corners of his mouth, though it disappeared the instant he began to speak. *Then* his black eyes expressed an almost enthusiastic earnestness, a firm determination, and even when his words were gentle and humane one felt that he was imperious and inexorable.

There was nothing worthy of notice in his thoroughly secular dress of black, except that he wore shoes with which he moved almost noiselessly, and a brown straw hat with a broad black ribbon.

After he had spent some time in giving an account of his visits among the sick and poor, and had meantime emptied a second and a third glass, he looked at an unwieldy silver watch which he drew forth from the front pocket of his black coat, and rose quickly, saying as a pretext that his time was not his own.

The professorin made a good-humoured joke about its being curious that one who lived as he did entirely for eternity should never have any time, but he did not answer with his accustomed smile. Only at the door, though till now he had not addressed a single word to Edwin, he said suddenly—

"I should feel honoured, Herr Doctor, if I might

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accompany you, if you can wait long enough to allow me first to speak a word in private to our excellent friend. Business!" he added, looking calmly at his patroness.

She seemed to have expected this, and, without showing any signs of curiosity, went into the study of the departed mathematician; Lorinser followed her.

Edwin's repugnance to the man had grown so strong that he prevailed on himself with difficulty to await his company. He knew nothing of what was going on within, but he heard that Frau Valentin grew somewhat excited, and that Lorinser soon calmed her; then a box was unlocked, and money was counted down on to the table. Immediately afterwards they both reappeared in the sitting-room, the professorin visibly annoyed and with flushed cheeks, Lorinser behind her, bearing himself with complete unconcern. He again kissed the widow's pretty hand, whispered something to her which Edwin did not understand, but would not suffer her to leave the room with them. In the next room the sempstresses were sitting quietly at their work. The youngest of them was a tall slim brunette with thick shining hair and magnificent black eyes. As Lorinser passed her, Edwin thought he saw the girl blush and hang her head over her sewing; but the candidate seemed to pay as little attention to her as to the others.

When the two men had gone some way along the street in silence, Lorinser suddenly stood still, took off his hat, and directing a vacant look to the clouds, said: "You must not have a false opinion of me. This sort of practical exercise of religion, this busy earning of heaven by deserving well of one's fellow-creatures, is heartily repugnant to me, and if I allow myself to be used as an instrument, it is only that I may introduce a little method into their madness. All these doings may be anything that one likes, may come from

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the heart, may be useful, and for certain natures a necessity, but they are as totally different from true religion as is the service of man from the true service of God."

"I have made Frau Valentin's acquaintance for the first time to-day," returned Edwin, "but she does not seem to be one of those people who hope to secure a place in heaven by their good works. Probably she can hardly imagine service, and therefore God's service, without activity."

"By these words you judge her," said the other, bringing his eyes down from the sky to the earth. "All action is earthly; it is only through what we *are*, through complete self-surrender, that we can attain, though imperfectly in this world, to the enjoyment of eternal things. It is possible that in a purer, more sensitive shell than are our earthly bodies we may be endowed with new organs with which we may actually take part in the inexpressible activity of the Godhead, and be in some measure fellow-workers with God. An ecstatic realization that God is within us is the highest to which we can attain here below. Everything that is a disturbance to this state of mind by giving us a satisfactory scope for our energies, and, so to say, drawing us away from our resting on God to stand on our own feet, is, though in a worldly point of view it may appear praiseworthy, a sin against the Holy Ghost, a crime against our own souls. I hardly know how far your philosophy enables you to follow me."

"To the furthest consequences of your theories of the universe, which lead, as is very well known, to mystical quietism," answered Edwin, with a calm smile. "It is not the first time that I have had to do with a mixed temperament like yours; yours is doubtless the phlegmatic-choleric, and my psychology is provided with a fitting formula for it. Only it is a little difficult to understand how some one with these

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opinions can become a clergyman and take office as the minister of a religion which calls itself the religion of love."

"You are quite right. I also am too honest to approve of the miserable compromises and shifts which most of the clergy for other reasons drag about with them all their life long, like escaped galley slaves the chains which have grown into their flesh. I absolutely refuse to have anything to do with the so-called state religion, and have a special horror and perhaps compassion for the madness which imagines that religion may be carried on in the mass like the business of a stock-jobber, for which a company draws up conditions. There never has been a revelation announced from heaven as the only one which was to be universally binding on the world. *Each moment* the fulness of God's grace reveals itself anew, the Son of man dies anew, the godly man is redeemed anew by the blood of the Saviour. But this is only known to those who do not change the gold of their love to God into the small coin of what they call the love of their neighbour, the consequence of which is that they are beggars when God calls for a sacrifice. We have only one neighbour, who is God. Our life is nothing but an act of grace on the part of the Creator, who, by means of this temporary estrangement from Him, fills us with the wish, the longing, the passion for reunion, and therewith the first consciousness of enjoyment in sinking back into eternity. The souls who never reach so high are, as it were, the impure element in the pure essence of God, and in the great smelting-furnace of time will be divided like dross from the pure ore, and thrown aside."

"Pray continue," said Edwin after a while, as the other remained silent. "I answer nothing because I know that any attempt to act on such a fantastic state of mind by means of arguments would be quite fruitless. But it always interests me anew to observe this

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singular state of melancholy, heightened by indulgence of the senses, which never rests until, having reached its highest degree, the superhumanly over-taxed powers fall into a voluptuous swoon."

Lorinser again stood still, and threw on his companion one of those side-looks which distorted his features so disagreeably.

"I see that theoretically you have approached the matter very closely," said he; "perhaps indeed you may be nearer than you think to the experience. The unsatisfactory nature of the commonly-accepted explanations of life's problems must long have been clear to you, as indeed to every one who strives honestly. Most men, when they come to the point where their world is boarded up, are discreet enough to recognize this point as the limit of all human knowledge, and forthwith turn round like pious sheep who have knocked their heads against the hurdles. But, my worthy friend, the hedge is not so high but that with a vigorous run one may spring over it, and this leap is so little a *salto mortale* that the only real true life begins on the other side. God's greatness is inconceivable. If we wish to approach Him we must soar into the infinite."

"And you believe that this flight merely depends on our own good will?"

"Not quite. Every one is not endowed with the physical power necessary for the effort, even though unsatisfied longing may be gnawing at his heart. There are temperaments, for instance, like that of our good professorin, which are wanting in the necessary elasticity; but where it really exists it can, like every other force, be exercised and strengthened."

"You would oblige me very much," said Edwin, with a smile, "if you would, when convenient, instruct me a little more in these gymnastics, but I have now reached my home, and I can hardly ask you to go in with me. The old staircase is dark and steep, and

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one has to grope up step by step, which is an easier operation for a dialectician of my stamp than for one who without aid can soar up into the seventh heaven."

Lorinser appeared not to have heard the jest. His eyes were staring after the figure of a woman who had approached the house from the opposite side, just before them, and who, with a slight bow to Edwin, had entered it.

"Who is the lady?" he inquired.

"Our fellow-lodger, a very talented teacher of music, who lives a most retired life, so much so that I can tell you nothing more about her."

"Allow me to make acquaintance with your home," said Lorinser, going on before Edwin into the entrance.

Balder looked up from his book with astonishment when Edwin entered with this strange individual. He allowed his soft spiritual eyes to rest for a while on the uncanny face, and then, as if he had seen all that could interest him in it, he turned them to the acacia tree, at which he continued to gaze steadily. On the other hand, the appearance of the youth seemed to have great attraction for the candidate. He immediately led the conversation back to his mystical experiences, revelations and divine joys, as he termed them, and maintained, as he turned with unconcealed flattery to Balder, that he seemed to be peculiarly and graciously fitted to penetrate into the depths of these mysteries. If he liked he would introduce him to other elect ones, and such illuminations should be his as would make all his former relations with the world and life appear insipid and unprofitable. Edwin contented himself by throwing in here and there a sarcastic question, which Lorinser only answered by a shrug of the shoulders. But Balder met this urgency with the most immovable calmness, and excusing himself very shortly, said that he was not in the habit of going out, and that he had no desire for further wonders than

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were revealed to him through his senses and by quiet meditation.

"You will think differently when you have received initiation," returned Lorinser. "I feel I may maintain with certainty that you are yourself, though without knowing it, in an unusual degree a child of God. The hour will come——"

Here he was interrupted by Reginchen's entrance with dinner for the brothers. Lorinser only honoured her with a passing glance, and the dishes which she brought did not appear sufficiently "elect" to make him wish to remain any longer. He begged that he might be allowed to return before long, and left the room with a confidential smile at Balder, which the latter escaped, as he was at the moment busily hobbling about in order to help Reginchen as she laid the table.

"Good gracious me!" said the girl, as the stealthy steps descended the stairs, "that is a queer gentleman! I would rather that mother should scold me for half a day than have to listen for half an hour to that die-away voice, or to see him creeping about as if he wore felt shoes. Happily he looks straight at nobody; if he was to do so, nobody could bear it. At all events I could not. Did you notice the white of his eye, Herr Walter? It was just like mother-of-pearl, or like the quicksilver in our thermometer. Oh dear! it was like a ghost, and not like a man."

"You warning angel!" cried Edwin, laughing. "But don't be afraid of him, Reginchen. That wolf in sheep's clothing will not come back so very soon. He saw that he had no power over our poor souls, and our flesh—I allude to the excellent piece that your mother has sent us to-day—did not excite his appetite."

"I hope you may be right," replied Balder, "but I fear we shall not so easily get rid of this troublesome guest. He is only watching for a more favourable

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opportunity to creep in here again, though I cannot imagine what he hopes to find."

"Well, we will wait and see, and if needs be must show him the door. Oh, look! he has left his card—'Unter den Linden, No. 10.' Of course in the most fashionable neighbourhood. The children of God, who neither sow nor reap because their heavenly Father cares for them, can allow themselves every luxury, while we, the children of this world— But you are right, Reginchen, the dinner is getting cold. Come, Balder, have a glass of wine; I must beg for a glass of water in order to wash out my disgust at the false prophet."

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CHAPTER XIV.

MEANTIME Lorinser had only gone down one flight, and had stopped at the door of the first floor. He read the name on the little plate, and listened. Then he rang the bell softly.

Christiane opened, and looked with surprise at the stranger whom she had before met with Edwin. After casting a penetrating glance at her, he turned his eyes up to the ceiling of the landing, as if spiders' webs had an absorbing interest for him.

"Fräulein Christiane Falk?" said he.

She nodded almost imperceptibly. "What do you want, sir?"

"Will you allow me to enter for a moment? I would rather tell you my business inside the door."

She retreated a step from the threshold in order to make way for him. He entered immediately, and in a moment had passed through the ante-room into the room which served both for sleeping and living in, with which we made acquaintance that first night. It did not look much more cheerful by daylight than by the light of the small midnight lamp. The walls were covered with a faded large-patterned paper, without any pictures. Not a flower, no carpet, none of the hundred and one trifles with which ladies who live alone are in the habit of making up for the absence

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of human society. There was a heap of books on the chest of drawers, on which there was not a single ornament; the volume of Schopenhauer's Parerga lay on the table before the sofa, while the piano was strewn with music in great confusion. Everything gave one the impression that this was not the abode of one to whom life was a joy, and the face of its owner tallied only too well with the witness borne by the lifeless things around her.

The features were without beauty, stern and unyouthful, the eyebrows over the light-grey eyes almost joined, and her hair, which was thick but not soft, hung like a heavy shadow over her pale brow. The full, powerful mouth, with its brilliantly white teeth, was the only pleasing feature in this otherwise uninviting picture; but it had a hairy growth above it, and by its unchangeable expression of dark defiance seemed to be constantly on the watch against any attempt to look agreeable. In her dress too she avoided all effort to please, though the clumsy folds could not quite conceal the beautiful form which bore the masculine, characteristic head.

She stood quietly at the table opposite the candidate, who, without waiting for an invitation, had thrown himself on to the little sofa, and like lightning had examined the whole room with his wandering eyes. By a careless movement of the hand he seemed to invite her to seat herself by his side, but she remained motionless, standing before him with her arms folded.

"Fräulein," he said, "I have heard so much of your talent; my friend Dr. Edwin, your fellow-lodger, has just been speaking so warmly of it, that it appears to me that Providence has shown me the way to you. In two words then, my business is this:—A society of friends who find the services of the church insufficient have for some time past established their own quiet divine service, in which music is a most essential part. The lady who has hitherto played the harmo-

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nium has gone away. There is no one among us to take her place, so I have engaged to find a substitute. I have thought of you, Fräulein. I need only look at that music-book, on which I read the names Bach and Gluck, and—let me speak quite openly—at your eyes, the light of which is deeper than in the eyes of most women, to see that you are no ordinary musician, but that you are full of the mysterious reality of true great art. These eyes are a witness that music is your religion. I will not conceal from you that this standpoint does not appear to me to be the highest. To me music is simply a step towards beatitude, and certainly one of the nearest to the throne of the Eternal One. However, I have not come to preach to you, and no one in our circle will annoy you with the expectation of your joining in our devotions. But what you will give us will in every sense be richly repaid. I only beg you to tell me on what conditions——"

"And if no conditions would tempt me to accept your offer?" said she, interrupting him with a calm voice.

"You will perhaps think differently when I tell you that you need not in person take the slightest part in these religious exercises. The instrument stands in a space separated by a tolerably large room from the hall where the meetings take place. You will play as if to yourself, and not a sound of what is going on in the little congregation will reach you. In this manner we shall mutually avoid disturbing one another, and our only communications will be on indifferent matters."

He observed her closely. She had cast down her eyes, and seemed to be considering how far she should disclose her inmost feelings to this stranger. Suddenly an expression of bitterness passed over her mouth, and the contraction of her brows became still more gloomy.

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"Forgive me," she said quickly, "but I feel obliged to refuse my co-operation in any shape to anything calling itself divine service. My reasons I may surely keep to myself. I doubt indeed whether you would understand them, much less approve of them. And even for the very high salary at which you seemed to hint I should not be inclined to sacrifice my convictions."

"Your reasons?" said he, smiling, as he rose and came nearer to her. "Will you allow me to read those reasons, or rather this reason, on your brow?"

"Sir!"

She looked at him with alarm, and retreated a step, as if to defend her personal freedom. He stood where he was, and began with perfect composure to look at the ceiling again.

"The one reason why you will not take part in any divine service is that you have no God whom you would like to serve," he said, in the most unconcerned way, as if it were something needing no explanation.

She did not answer at once. The demoniacal confidence of this man seemed to overpower her. She must first arm herself with her old scorn before venturing to answer him.

"Did you really read that on my forehead, or only in the book which lies on the table?"

"If I had had the honour," he answered, quite gently, "of being known to you longer, you would allow me to be quite capable of deciphering an easy riddle like this without such help. Believe me, the author of that book, with all his atheism, knew more of God than you do; at all events at this moment. For he was acquainted with that which alone leads to God, and which as far as I can see has remained unknown to you. This ignorance has widened your natural alienation from God, which you share with thousands, and has made it appear to you unalterable; I speak of *sin*. You need not answer; I know it. Mistakes and weak-

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nesses may have entered into your life, but sin you have never known—*that* sin which alone wakes the stubborn heart to a sense of need, of longing for redemption, that burning feeling of one's own shame and littleness which makes us thirst for God, and which will at last be assuaged by the dew of grace. You smile. This language seems to you too flowery to express the naked truth. A day will come when you will think of this hour without a smile.

"No," he continued, in sudden excitement, walking up and down with hasty steps; "I will not give you up. At the very first sound of your voice I felt too powerfully drawn to you to go away now and say: This strong, noble soul will never find its way into the holiest of holies. Even such a powerful guide as music will not take it beyond the threshold. Believe me, Fräulein, I have myself experienced all this; like you, I have said: The God who created heaven and earth and myself is too great for my love, too far for my longing, too dumb for my trust! And why indeed should I long for Him? What is wanting so long as I have *myself*, my virtue, my knowledge, my earthly happiness, my good works? For the first time on that day when I learnt to know sin, when I had *lost myself*, did I know how near He, who is afar, can come, how eloquently He can console, with what tender love He can draw one to Himself. Since that time all the sorrows of the world, of which that confused book talks, appear to me mere child's play in comparison to the misfortune of finding in oneself all that one needs, and of wishing to overcome the invincible horror of existence by common honesty, courage, and goodness. 'Ueb'immer Treu' und Redlichkeit.'"*

He remained standing before her, and held both his hands out to her. She, however, kept her arms quietly crossed over her breast.

"I do not understand you," she replied, "and I do

* A very popular song: "Always practise faith and honesty."

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not see why I should give myself the trouble to understand you, or why you should give yourself the trouble to wish to help me in your way. I do not feel ill, and what is wanting to make me *happy* neither God nor man can give me. If the feeling of your sinfulness makes you long for a 'redeemer,' I do not envy you this happiness. I am a solitary woman; I have nothing but myself, my pride—my scorn if you will. Were I to lose that, and become a worm, to roll myself in mire, then doubtless I should also be in a condition to *crawl to the cross.* But the God who must first draw me to Himself by sin and shame, for such a God I do not long. If He will not take to His heart honest, upright beings, then I will always remain His step-child."

"You *will!*" said Lorinser, in a suppressed voice, but with emphasis. "If only you *can!*"

"And what can hinder me from remaining true to myself?"

"One who is mightier than one's will—the devil."

"I am too old for such nursery tales."

"Oh, my dear child," he replied, "these are tales which one only understands when one has worn out one's nursery shoes, and is weaned from the milk of human understanding. Have you never found that one's will may be overpowered by a sudden, almost magical influence? Has no eye ever fascinated you, no voice made your heart beat, the touch of a hand never disarmed your most defiant courage?"

A deep red overspread her dark face.

"How can you, sir," she said with vehemence, "play the inquisitor to a lady whom you see for the first time? I beg you to leave me; our conversation is becoming——"

She retreated as if to leave the way to the door free. He smilingly took his hat from the table, and swinging it softly backwards and forwards, continued standing in the middle of the room, with his eyes fixed upon the ground.

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"You are unjust," said he; "I am not so indiscreet as to wish to intrude upon your confidence. What I said was not meant to apply in particular to you. Sentimental poets and children of the world speak of the *magic* of love. As if it were not an entirely natural thing; so much so that the force which is here put upon the will has been rightly compared to chemical processes. It is only a question of *magic* where the *unnatural* or the *supernatural* takes place. If you follow your inclinations, your blood, your nature, even to the worst ends and to the great detriment of yourself and others, is there any witchcraft in all this? Error, weakness, perversity are, I repeat, human evils, and do not lead to God. But to be carried away, to do that which is most contrary to your nature, to be *obliged* in sorrow and terror to do what you abominate, to become hateful to your dearest, namely yourself—don't you see, Fräulein, that that can only happen through an overmastering charm, the only one that still works in this enlightened world, and which God sends His redeeming grace to destroy, or at all events to wash out the consequences—*the magic of sin.* I must ask you to excuse my having intruded so long. Perhaps I may often have the pleasure of conversing with you about these mysteries."

He bowed with a look and smile as if he were a tamer of wild beasts, and were leaving a newly-mated lioness in her cage.

She stood speechless, and made no motion to show him out. Her arms hung by her side, her chin was sunk on her breast, her eyes were closed as if she had given herself up to the most comfortless thoughts.

Outside, just as Lorinser was closing Christiane's door after him, Mohr and Franzelius were ascending the narrow staircase together. Coming from opposite sides, they had met at the house door, and though the meeting was unwelcome to both—Mohr, with his comedy in his pocket, would gladly have found the

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brothers alone—each was too awkward or too proud to give way to the other.

They had greeted one another silently, and Mohr had allowed the printer to precede him. As they now stumbled upon the candidate on the stairs, Franzelius stepped aside as some one might do who unexpectedly trod on a toad. He indeed forgot the uncomfortable terms on which he stood with the persistent scoffer, and, stopping on the landing, while he looked back at the man who glided by them so rapidly, he said in a tone of the most violent horror—

"Did you see that man, Mohr?"

"He came out of Fräulein Christiane's room. A fearful favour to the boy! * Who is he? How do you know him, Gracchus?"

"It is the same lying hypocrite who lately made that speech at our meeting. It is a pity that it did not occur to me sooner, or I would have thanked him for denouncing me to the police."

"Or perhaps you might have helped him downstairs a little quicker. He seems to have smelt out this *esprit de l'escalier*," said Mohr, trying to be witty, though he immediately added more gloomily, "What does that pale fellow seek there? Could she not have shown him the door, as she does to better people?"

"A bug will get in anywhere."

"You are right, Franzel," replied Mohr, with a fierce laugh. Then, compressing his under lip, "Ye gods!" he muttered to himself, "I did not think a man could sink so low as to envy a bug."

* Furchtbare Gunst dem Knaben.—*Faust*, 2nd part.

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BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

WHOEVER undertakes to write "a true story," and ours is as judicially accredited as any for which a writer of romance ever vouched as a compilation of "family records,"—whoever represents life as it is *lived*, and not as it is *imagined*, must be prepared for manifold objections and contradictions. The improbable is well known to be that which happens most frequently, and nothing again finds less credence than the fact which nobody doubts, namely, that there are exceptions to the rule. On the stage we are not accustomed to see a lover take a *charakterrolle*,* and as little will the reader be able to believe us when we inform him of the authentic fact that Edwin, faithful to his self-imposed vow, really did wait to the end of the week before paying another visit to the dangerous house in the Jägerstrasse, indeed that he tried himself still further by making it the afternoon, and by occupying himself as usual up to the last moment. Our knowledge of the age which he had reached before being attacked by this love fever only makes the matter more incomprehensible, for youthful maladies

* Charakterrolle, the principal part in a piece; the lover's part is more frequently than not played by a subordinate actor.

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are usually more violent when they attack grown people. We have hardly tested his philosophy and the influence of the exact sciences on his disposition sufficiently to know whether we may ascribe this stoical self-control to them. However that may be, when on that Saturday afternoon he did set out on his fatal expedition, he was far from being in a philosophical frame of mind. His hand trembled perceptibly as he passed it over Balder's head; instead of the two volumes of Wilhelm Meister which he meant to put into his pocket, he took up the second volume and the Farbenlehre, which would hardly have got the better of Balzac in the estimation of the mysterious beauty. To Meister Feyertag, who tried to inveigle him into an intellectual conversation in the yard, he replied so confusedly that the excellent man was quite delighted, and assured his wife that the doctor was beginning to respect his intelligence and his intellectual "impotence," for he had said things to him on that day which were fearfully learned, indeed almost incomprehensible.

On the way our hero, who sadly lacked heroism just then, tried to prepare himself for the possibility of her not being at home, or of his being sent away, and even tried to persuade himself that it would be the best thing which could happen to him. He resolved to bear it like a man, and to make no attempt to corrupt the striped waistcoat. Only when the solemn boy received him with the words, "My mistress is at home, and begs that you will step in," did it strike him how impossible it would have been to go away without seeing her again.

When he entered the little red drawing-room she rose from her seat at the table, where she had apparently been writing, and came to meet him with the unembarrassed friendliness with which one would meet a long-expected acquaintance. The expression of coldness had disappeared from her features, though

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a certain fitful dreaminess was a sort of reminder of her former expression. She thanked him for having kept his word, and for bringing some more books.

"But," added she, "I cannot trouble you any more, especially if you do as you did the first time, and merely bring the books to the door. Your time must be too valuable to use it in going messages for one who is really unknown to you, and I cannot promise that a closer acquaintance would repay your trouble."

He uttered a few civil words in answer, which betrayed nothing of what was passing within him. He was again so curiously bewitched by her presence that he needed an interval in which to regain his composure. She appeared to him to-day, in a simple gown of undyed silk, with her hair twisted round in a plait, and again without ornament of any kind, incredibly more charming than on the first occasions. There was, besides, something of shyness, almost of sadness in her voice, in each of her movements, which infected him and abashed him far more than her former confidence.

"I believe you would have gone away again to-day if I had not expressly asked you to come in," said she. "It hardly needed so much discretion on your part to prove to me that you are an exception to the general rule. I knew the very first minute that you were different from other men, from whose importunity a lonely girl must defend herself; therefore I was glad to think of seeing you again, and to be able to thank you personally. I live so entirely alone that, though it is my own wish, I do find the days a little long, and sometimes, almost without knowing it, I find myself longing to hear another voice besides the chirping of the birds and the unimportant remarks of the servants. Also one would so gladly talk of what one has read, only as to these books," she added, hesitatingly, pointing with her rosy forefinger to the book which

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lay by her portfolio, "that you brought me the other day——"

"Which of them have you read?"

"Many of the poems; I knew most of them from collections, a few even when I was at school. But they are most beautiful altogether, as far as I understand them. But then—Werther, which I have read for the first time—you will hardly believe it, though I am one and twenty——"

"How I envy you!"

"Why?"

"I devoured it when I was fifteen, and much too young and green to enjoy this the most beautiful and ripest of all youthful works."

"Well then, perhaps I am too old," said she, "unless I can still be too young. For, you will think it very silly, and perhaps incomprehensible, but I had difficulty in getting through it. That is to say," correcting herself quickly, "I found all the details wonderfully beautiful,—the fire, the clearness, the elevated melancholy ideas, and the way in which nature seems to live for him,—indeed I copied out a good deal so as to be able to read it again; but the whole, the story itself—you will certainly consider me either childish or heartless if I confess to you that it did not touch me in the very least, even when Werther shoots himself."

He looked into her black eyes with a quiet smile.

"Not so much as Père Goriot?" he said.

"No," answered she, half audibly. "I can't help it, but nothing touches me unless I can feel it myself. This good Père Goriot, who is so badly repaid for all that he does for his daughters; the daughters themselves, who have a regular passion for fabulous luxury and for spending money,—all that I understand very well. I also had a father who would have sacrificed himself for me had it been necessary, as I would have done for him, and it is not at all strange to me to set

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one's heart on a thousand beautiful things which only rich people ought to possess. But that a man should no longer care to live because—because he is in love with the wife of another, of that I have no conception. Why do you look at me like that? Don't you believe me? You really may. I always say what I think."

"I only look at you," he said, "because your words, which I do not doubt, suit neither your face nor your one and twenty years."

"And why not?"

"Pray do not think that I mean to pay you a stupid compliment, but I thought that with such a face it would be difficult to spend one and twenty years in the world without learning, at all events through others, into what dangerous follies a man mortally in love may be hurried. And surely if you have made some one unhappy it must have touched you, even if your own heart has remained untouched? You know of hunger only by hearsay, and yet the sight of poverty will touch you?"

"Yes, indeed," she replied, thoughtfully; "but you are mistaken if you think that I have never suffered want. There have been times in my life,—but that is another matter. As regards love, when it has come before me it has struck me either as untrue and ridiculous, or has filled me with disgust and horror, never with sympathy."

His astonishment increased with each word she uttered, but he could not doubt her sincerity. If, however, it were as she said,—and her innocent, earnest look confirmed it,—how had she fallen into such more than equivocal company, and come to live in these suspicious lodgings? If she had nothing to repent of, why this flight from mankind, this enigmatical retirement in spite of youth and independence?

Seeing that she looked at him with surprise at his silence, he said, only for the purpose of saying something—

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"If you have such a contempt for the passion which, combined with hunger, has confessedly kept the world going since the creation, your novel-caterer will have a difficult task. Or would you be satisfied with tendency-novels on the newest pattern, through which there runs a slight thread of love story just enough not to discourage the lending libraries at the first onset?"

"No," she laughed; "I have not always been quite so much spoilt. Dear me! if only you knew all that I used to read to my father—always French books, which were often, as I knew very well, when he made me skip over a chapter, very little fit for a young girl. But there is one thing which I cannot understand. Why do authors understand their advantage so little? Why do they not write stories full of grandeur, where everything is distinguished, rich, and splendid: beautiful parks, castles, servants without end, every evening fireworks, concerts, and balls. I am never tired of reading of such things; just as when I was a child I could always read the stories over and over again in which a fairy or a magician built up in a night beautiful palaces of gold and precious stones, the stalls of the horses of silver, their shoes set with diamonds. Should not poetry paint a more beautiful world than the one which we already know too well, with all its *petites misères?* Instead of which stories of village life are all the fashion. Who can be amused by reading how Christen went to look for a wife, and how he first comes upon a clean farm-house, and then upon a deserted one? And then there is always the question of a few hundred thalers more or less. If they were there, there would be an end of the story. Do you see, even in Werther—you must not be vexed at my openness—it seemed to me so curious: nothing but narrow circumstances, little provincial people, and the heroine herself—to say nothing of the bread-and-butter. Was there anything elevating or great about her? Did she love Werther, or did she not? And

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if she loves him— But you are smiling; I know I am saying very stupid things. If it seems to you worth while, pray instruct me. It is so dull always to think by oneself, when one has naturally always the best of the argument."

"I have never felt any inclination, Fräulein," said he, "to disturb people who are quite clear as to their own feelings, even if I happen to feel quite differently. Why should you not have the right to indulge your inclination for all that is beautiful and splendid? I only wish that you may belong to the few lucky ones who never do have to look at the seamy side of life. Of course those who are already acquainted with it have naturally an interest in discovering possessions and treasure even in poor, narrow circumstances, so as to satisfy their hearts and make life lovely. But you——"

"You are very much mistaken," said she, earnestly. "I have already told you that I know very well the feeling of sitting in shadow, and of being warmed by no ray of the sunshine which is lighting up the fairy palaces of others. And that is just the very reason why I do not wish to be reminded by books of all that I have had quite enough to do with in my life, and which I have found neither amusing nor 'poetical.' Whatever you may think of external poverty, with its charms and joys, do you really consider inward poverty, the small, miserable, starved feelings, the oppression under which a human soul may daily live, as a fit subject for poetry?"

He was preparing to answer her, with secret astonishment at the tone of painful eagerness which was apparent in her words, when the striped waistcoat appeared in the doorway of the dining-room, and threw open the folding doors. The little page had evidently only just curled his hair, tied his white cravat tighter, and put on a pair of white cotton gloves, which only made his stumpy child's hands look still more clumsy.

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"Excuse my not altering my ways of going on," said the beautiful girl, suddenly changing to a cheerful tone. "There stands my tyrant. Though he is so little, and appears so submissive, were I to miss the dinner hour I should forfeit his favour. As regards understanding and sense of duty, the young gentleman would compare well with many a grown person; but his appetite is quite that of a child. It must have its due every two or three hours, or he gets quite cross. All the same though, may I ask you to be my guest? My restaurant provides for me so plentifully that Jean often finds it difficult to get through all I leave. You have already dined? Well, at all events you will give me your company; my usual society, to which I will introduce you, is after all only a makeshift."

She preceded him quickly into the little dining-room, where the boy had hastily placed a second chair before the nicely-arranged little table. But before seating herself she went up to the bird-cage and opened the gilt barred door.

"Look!" she said, clapping three times, as if to give the signal that dinner was about to commence; "here they come, chirping away. A few know very well what it is all about, and are informing the new-comers, the shy ones who keep in the background without daring to come forth. You must not think that I enjoy keeping the poor things caged up here. Almost every day I buy fresh ones, natives, as you see, in order to feed them a little, and then, when they have given me their company at dinner, to let them fly away. Many of them will not fly away; I cannot help them. He who will give up his freedom for good cheer may, nay, must, remain behind the bars. Tu l'as voulu!"

He listened in silence while a part of the speckled feathered troop flew out of the cage and fluttered on to the table, and into the corners of the room, while

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the others remained timidly in the cage. The window stood wide open. Some few of the most insignificant of them, after a moment's consideration, sharpened their beaks on the window-sill, tried their wings, and then soared out with loud chirping and twittering. The remainder, amongst whom a fine goldfinch appeared the most distinguished, pressed round the refreshments and the covered dishes on the table, in anxious expectation of what they should get.

"I don't mind being alone the whole day," said the young hostess, who had now taken her place, inviting Edwin with a charmingly hospitable gesture to take the chair opposite to her; "but it is horrid to *eat* alone. One never appears to oneself so inhuman, so selfish and hard-hearted, as when one sits all alone and puts bit after bit into one's mouth. It always makes me think at once of the hundreds of thousands who have nothing to eat; the thought spoils even my favourite dishes, and makes me so uncomfortable that I can hardly satisfy my hunger. Do look at the ill-mannered rabble! How they quarrel and scuffle for every little crumb! The greediest one is that little magpie, who will not allow the blackbird one tiny bit. Will you behave better, you naughty thing!"

She took a silver salt-spoon and tapped the offending bird several times gently on the back, without making much impression on him. Then she cut up some little dessert biscuits into squares, mixed them with some sugared almonds, and placed these dainties on half a dozen little plates which she arranged in a circle on the table. The little parasites collected at once round their food; a few shy ones remained on the side tables, contented with the crumbs she threw to them, while the boldest perched on the edge of the fruit dish, and feasted undisturbedly on the magnificent pears and peaches.

Meantime she began to eat, after having invited Edwin repeatedly, but in vain, to join her; she however

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insisted on his trying the sweet Spanish wine, which she only sipped out of a tall wine-glass in order to drink to his health. Her style of eating was much the same; she put tiny helpings on her plate, and then picked at them with a silver knife and fork. She tried four or five vegetables, but there was only one sweet dish of which she really ate, and as for the meat, she hardly touched it. He jested with her about it, and asked whether she were a vegetarian. She made him explain the meaning of the term, which she did not quite understand.

"I like that," she said, shaking her head thoughtfully. "Do you know, I am a born vegetarian without knowing it till to-day. I have often been laughed at about it. Look at that partridge, with his roasted beak stuck so sadly into his own larded breast! I cannot look at it without feeling pricks of conscience at being the cause of the early death of this happy creature; and yet I never knew him personally. I never could make up my mind to eat the chickens which my mother had reared. She called it affectation; but, dear me! I used to be much too hungry to be sentimental at the expense of my appetite. Now I do not need so much, and could live quite well on bread and fruit."

She said all this with a mixture of innocent cheerfulness and of womanly self-consciousness, together with a perfect confidence in her bearing towards her guest, so that he grew more and more puzzled what to think of this wondrous being. He had had very little to do with women who had appeared to him remarkable in any way, and all his psychological knowledge did not suffice for this problem, which would indeed have been a hard one for a more experienced connoisseur in women. Only an unmistakable instinct told him that whatever might be equivocal or mysterious in her nature or her circumstances, the foundation was pure and genuine, and that even the

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unconcealed coquetry with which she played the part of a fairy among the princes who had been turned by enchantment into birds was most innocently fantastic, and suited her as well as the ribbons and finery with which a child might dress itself up as a princess.

"You have grown so silent," said she, as she peeled some fruit and laid half on a plate before him. "I am sure that you disapprove of something; perhaps of my venturing to trust you as an old acquaintance. Say really what you are thinking; not that I could alter myself, but only that I should not like to be a constraint upon you."

"I am thinking," said he, "of the wonderful chance which has brought me here. Is it not indeed like a fairy story that we should be sitting together like this, and that you do not even know my name, while I know nothing more of you than your name?"

She raised the silver fruit-knife which she held in her hand, and pressed it against her laughing mouth with a roguishly mysterious mien.

"Be satisfied," said she; "everything is going on capitally without witchcraft. It is great fun as long as it lasts, and we shall only spoil it if we rack our brains."

"But will it last?" said he, seriously.

"A little while—perhaps a few weeks; who knows? Afterwards—what will come afterwards nobody knows. But if it seems to you like a fairy story, be kind enough and wise enough to leave it so; do not urge me to explain everything to you. There is nothing particular behind, at all events nothing particularly pretty or cheerful. I am really glad to have made your acquaintance, I was so lonely; and, situated as I am, I must beware of all acquaintances in whom I do not feel implicit confidence. How it was that I trusted in you from the very first I hardly know, but so it was, and it would grieve me very much if you were to think ill of me, or were to be deterred by my openly-expressed

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opinion about this or that—about what I read or see—from coming again. Of course you must not come too often; I don't want to make people talk; but two or three times a week—about this time before the theatre. But then you must not always dine at home first. Will you promise?"

She stood up and held out her hand to him; he seized it and pressed it heartily.

"Gesegnete Mahlzeit!"* said she, smiling. "In my parents' house we used always to say that, and I quite miss it here. Jean is too respectful, and I cannot train the birds to say it. I hope I shall see you again soon, and then you will bring me the other things by Goethe of which you spoke."

He bowed silently, and involuntarily laying his hand on his heart, as if to assure her of his consent, he took his leave in the most wonderful state of mind.

As he left the house a light carriage passed. A gentleman, who was driving himself, threw the reins to the groom behind, and sprang out with a laugh, exclaiming, "Doctor! What the devil are you about?"

"Marquard! You! Have you a patient in this house?"

"Only one, and I see that my professional efforts are superfluous, as he has taken the case into his own hands. Or do you not come straight from *her?*"

"From her? I do not understand."

"Hypocrite! as if I did not see the glow of your heart burning through your waistcoat." (Marquard loved to quote Heine.) "My good fellow, it is not so easy to mislead an old diagnostic like myself. But how the deuce did you come upon her traces again?"

"Let us walk a few steps down the street," said Edwin, reddening. "The windows are open; every word can be heard from above."

He passed his arm through the doctor's and drew him away, telling him in a low voice the story of the

* The German grace before meals.

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lost book-marker, but leaving him in doubt as to whether the occurrence had not chanced that very day.

"And you," he continued hastily, "how did you discover this to be the abode of our neighbour in the box?"

"By virtue of the vein on which my skill has chanced," * declaimed Marquard, with mock pathos. "The renewal of my acquaintance with the beautiful sphinx is not older than two days, and I fear that it will hardly survive the third. The day before yesterday I was visiting a patient in one of the houses opposite, when I was suddenly sent for to a boy who had fallen dangerously ill. I was to lose no time in coming to this very house where we have just met. I hastened on the wings of my calling, rushed up the steps, entered the apartment on the first floor— Edwin, a doctor is an enviable being! All doors open before him; doors which to you common mortals only spring open once perhaps by chance, when you come as honest finders, or maybe as nefarious seekers. Fancy my delight and astonishment when I was met by the beautiful riddle, who at the theatre had snubbed me so calmly, but who was now in the sweetest flutter of alarm, and begging for my assistance."

"Was she ill?"

"Not she herself. She has a little lad in her service, a most ridiculous young rogue, who had already caused me some amusement when he came to fetch me. The mysterious unknown, who by the way seems to have a very good heart, especially towards children, had allowed her page to invite a younger brother, and these two young men of the world had indulged in the servants' hall in a bottle of Cape wine, ending up with a frightful cigar. The interior of the striped waistcoat is apparently hardened to such sins, and had borne the orgie without damage, while the

* Kraft der Ader die ich rühmlich schlug..—*Bürger.*

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hopeful Jean Junior lay on his brother's bed as pale as a plucked lily, and the young lady, who did not guess the cause, the young tipplers having carefully concealed the bottle, was frightened out of her wits. Now Jean had winked knowingly at me, and indeed had taken me into his confidence on the way, so I could not fail him by making light of the case. Besides, the successful treatment of a serious case says a great deal more for a young doctor's skill than the cure of an attack which is merely the result of excess. I therefore conveyed the pale ne'er-do-weel in my own carriage to his unsuspicious parents, and yesterday I was able to give a very good report of his convalescence. I am here now to bring a second bulletin, but as the patient was eating pears and dumplings with the greatest enjoyment when I left him, and as his kind patroness intends to go and pay him a visit herself, you see that I shall not have many more visits to make in the fairy palace. I am very sorry, especially for your sake, as, faithful to my promise——"

"I told you the other day——"

"That you are a Cato, or a Plato, whichever you like best. But without having felt your pulse, I see by your whole bearing that you are in a fair way of remaining neither the one nor the other. My blessing on your conversion, old bachelor, and better luck than mine has been."

"Yours?"

"Well, I suppose you will understand that I did my best yesterday to show myself not merely the experienced physician, but also the profound connoisseur of the female heart and of female beauty. *Oleum et operam!* I tell you a statue, a marble sphinx, would have been touched by my amiability, while this young glacier in Brussels lace remained just as unapproachable as that first evening. And would you believe it? My secret ally, Jean the Little, though he owed me gratitude, was a *rocher de bronze* where his mistress

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was concerned. The lady's maid, my last hope, never came upon the scene. And so I am just as wise as before, or even less so; for all my information and knowledge have not served to clear up the matter, and I have no idea whether she belongs to the great world, the 'half world,' or to no world at all."

"I dare say you will meet with people who will be able to enlighten you."

"It is very probable that others may know more than I do," said the doctor, stopping to rub his spectacles. "However, as I told you the other day, I give her up. For the second time and for ever I renounce all my pretensions, and swear by the *gens d'armen thurm* that it does not cost me much. She is an amphibious being, a beautiful blameless maddening young serpent. I prefer warm red blood. I have made a discovery—curiously enough, in your house—a *soubrette* who is taking lessons of your pianoforte lady; nothing so exquisite and princess-like as our sphinx, but 'for the stars one does not sigh,' unless one is an incorrigible idealist and star-gazer like certain people."

He laughingly shook Edwin by the hand and entered the house before which his carriage was standing.

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CHAPTER II.

SINCE that day Edwin had become a regular guest at the house in the Jägerstrasse. He came every other day, but no more than on the first occasion would he allow himself to be persuaded to diminish little Jean's share of the dinner. He only dined symbolically with his young hostess, by dipping a biscuit into the pretty little glass which she filled with Spanish wine. When she asked him why he would never give her the pleasure of *really* dining with her, he pretended that he was wedded to the old-fashioned habit of dining at noon. In real truth he felt he could not bear to live well here in the fairy palace after having merely looked on at the scanty meal in the "tub." Anyhow he was now so long and so often separated from Balder that at least he would keep to their cosy meal times, when a jest with Reginchen dissipated for a time his brooding thoughts.

It only happened all the more frequently that the evening passed without his showing his face at home. It is true that she always dismissed him before she went to the theatre, and never proposed that he should accompany her thither, or see her afterwards. But each hour spent in chatting with her, when he schooled himself to play the "wise friend," as she

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laughingly called him, and to behave with calmness and composure, left him so excited, so burning with doubt, longing, dissatisfaction, and bliss, that he was obliged to indulge himself in solitary night wanderings before he could venture into society again.

He well knew that at this time Balder was seldom alone. Mohr came almost every evening to play chess with him, or to chat, sitting at the open window where he could hear Christiane's piano. He declared that this music and Balder's fair head were the only medicine which could do anything to soothe him when he was suffering from an unusually severe attack of his chronic self-contempt. Sometimes he brought some of his verses, or a scene out of his celebrated comedy, "I am I, and stake myself," in order to submit them to his friend's judgment, but he could never make up his mind to read them aloud. Now and then Franzelius made his appearance in the evening, but always took himself off when he found Mohr. The latter, at Balder's request, really did make an honest effort to refrain from banter, and to spare the peppery "tribune of the people," who in a *tête-à-tête* was so defenceless. But his mere presence was enough to put the irritable man into a bad temper, especially as it seemed to him that since Mohr's return something had come between him and Balder. He loved the boy more than any one in the world, and knew that there was no one who understood him so well. He was jealous of every smile which Mohr's queer manner drew from his favourite, and he felt himself so stupid and dull as to be at a double disadvantage with the cynical joker, whom on the other hand he despised as a drone among the bees.

Balder, with his loving heart, would probably have been more concerned to pacify his mortified friend had he not been preoccupied himself. Now, even when his friends were about him, his thoughts were always secretly with his brother in his unknown

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haunts, of which he heard but little. Not that Edwin made any secret of the place to which he went, or of the fact of his being day by day more bewitched by the charm of the mysterious connection, but he could not make up his mind to confess all his weakness to his brother. He would then have been forced to acknowledge it to himself, against which a feeling of manly pride protested.

When at night, after long aimless wanderings, instead of going home he again turned his steps to the house in the Jägerstrasse in order to wait, squeezed up in a corner of shadow on the opposite side, till her carriage brought her back from the theatre, and then hour after hour to keep guard lest the door should again open to let in or out a more fortunate being, till at last her light was extinguished, and everything around in the cool autumn night was at rest except his own feverish heart, how miserable, how contemptible he appeared to himself! How he cursed the hour which had first brought them together, and how he made the most doughty resolutions never again to cross the fatal threshold! But the next day found him again at the little table, where he envied the birds who pecked at their food without thought or anxiety.

She seemed to have no misgiving how it stood with the wisdom of her "wise friend." She bore herself towards him on the tenth day exactly as she had done on the first, with the same easy friendliness, the same confidence, as if it never entered her head that anything could separate them, or still less that he could ever be anything more to her. When he came and went she gave him her hand, as to an old friend; she scolded him if he kept her waiting; she cross-questioned him in the most sympathizing way about his health, after having on one occasion extorted from him a confession of his nervous sufferings, and urged him to try all sorts of cures of which she had read or heard. More than once she confessed to him that

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she really did not know how she had got through the long days before she had made his acquaintance, and that she quite dreaded the moment when he should grow tired of wasting his time with so foolish and ignorant a girl. It is true that the tone in which she said this proved that her alarm was hardly serious. But though she must have been quite conscious of her attractions, it never seemed to occur to her, even in her dreams, that he could feel a serious passion for her. The longer he observed her, the more convinced did he become that all that she had said to him about love was her true, honest opinion, indeed that it appeared to her a kind of madness which every now and then attacked weak souls. But that a reasonable man who visited her every other day, who brought her serious books, and who said most sensible things, could be attacked by it was obviously incomprehensible to her. He saw it all quite clearly; he recognized the hopelessness of his darkly-hidden wishes, the improbability of thawing the ice which surrounded her like a wall of defence. He asked her once what she had seen in him to inspire her with such confidence; she who was so unapproachable to all others. She only laughed at first, and said, shaking her head, that it was a secret which she meant to keep for herself. But when, contrary to his habit, he persisted, she confessed that it was neither his honest face nor anything he had said which had seemed to assure her of his not abusing her confidence, but—here she looked in his face with a charmingly merry smile, as if she felt very superior, though at the same time a little fearful lest he should be offended—because he had worn *no gloves*, and also that on his second visit he had dressed himself with no greater care than when he had come to return the book-marker.

He laughed; but it was an effort to take it as a joke; it was far from being a joke to him.

It was quite evident that she had only given him

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the preference because, looking on him as a being of a totally different order, she had felt there was nothing to fear from him. In the great retirement of her life a visitor who brought her amusement without expecting anything in return was very welcome, and that he remained as strange to her as she to him only increased the charm of their intercourse. Besides which, an individual who visited her without gloves, and always in the same grey coat, must be below all suspicion both in her eyes and those of the world.

There were moments in which he felt grateful for the sincerity with which she had shown him the impassable gulf between her and his longings and needs —moments in which he felt a sudden terror, as if at a terrible misfortune, at the mere thought of her ever returning his passion. Apart from the mystery which surrounded her, how could he hope to make his lot and that of his brother, their contented poverty, the duties of his profession, harmonize with the kind of life led by her, apparently the only one that could satisfy her, as she expressed no wish to alter it? It was only necessary to imagine, in the place of Reginchen bringing them their dinner in the "tub," the form of his enchantress followed by the striped waistcoat carrying a silver dish, to measure the impracticable abyss which lay between them.

In this manner several weeks had passed without bringing any change in their intercourse either for better or worse. Not that he always found her in the same humour; sometimes he thought he remarked traces of tears, or she greeted him with the surprise of one who has difficulty in recalling her thoughts from afar to him and that which he brought. Then a few words from him were sufficient to clear her brow and to turn her again into the good, lovely, natural child which *au fond* she really was, in spite of her being spoilt and living such a strangely independent life. She liked to provoke him by some naughtiness

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or thoughtlessness into treating her with sarcastic calmness, as a being not entirely accountable. But he carefully avoided making her feel his superiority, except by ironical cheerfulness. She loved to let her imagination wander, to extemporize on the world and mankind, on life and death, time and eternity, and when she did so he was quite content to sit by for half an hour at a time, listening to her, and tattooing his apple-peel with a silver knife. She was always vexed that he did not think it worth his while ever to contradict her, and she explained to him that even were he to laugh outright and make fun of her it would not be so uncivil as to sit there silently smiling to himself when she was talking of the most serious things. If it were only the wind blowing, or a stream flowing, he could not make a more unmeaning face. He would then ask her laughingly whether it were his fault that her vicinity should often have the same wonderful effect on him as nature, whose manifold voices rippled over him with the same elemental power without his feeling called upon to reply? He should be a ridiculous pedant were he to attempt to teach logic to the birds in the forest, or reason to the waterfall.

And yet when he returned it almost always happened that the conversation went back to the point at which it had been broken off the last time. Then they changed *rôles*, and it became his turn to hold forth, and to extemporize without interruption for a long while on the deepest questions. It was the most curious dialogue that can be imagined, for twice twenty-four hours always passed between question and answer. Did this arise from his dread of making the contrast between their natures too apparent, both to her and to himself, from the fear that each dispute might lead to an irrevocable separation, while he considered it almost his duty when the subject had become rather more indifferent to her to bring forward his contradiction, and not to

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disavow his own opinion? Or had he a misgiving that he should lose all control over himself the more he gained over her, and the more he succeeded in reconciling the inconsistencies of her nature, and in establishing an intimacy between them? And why should he be so bold as to make the attempt? Under the best circumstances what could he hope? Would it be worth while to tame a gazelle, an antelope, in a climate and on a soil so unfitted for tropical domestic animals?

It was an afternoon in September; the first chilly grey rain of autumn was falling in the empty streets, the windows were for the first time closely shut, and a little fire was lighted in the chimney for the sake of the cheerful look of the flame. For the first time also the beautiful being, who showed her kinship with the fairies by maintaining that she had never been ill, complained of a slight headache. She countermanded the carriage which was to have taken her to the theatre, and stretched herself on the sofa in the little red drawing-room, with her feet turned to the fire, so that the red flickering flame threw a transparent unsteady light over her pale face.

"Do read me something," asked she of Edwin; "if it sends me to sleep, so much the better. But not Hermann and Dorothea. I don't want to vex you, as we have already quarrelled about it once; I cannot help it if those wonderful verses rock me as if I were sitting in a swing, though I would gladly remain awake to read the pretty story. Do you know, I consider Dorothea a most enviable person; I never remember reading a story which ended better than hers did. Turned adrift, poor, an orphan, without a home, and then suddenly to find house and home, to be loved and taken care of; and it all comes to pass quite naturally, as if it might happen so any day! She must have been very charming," she added, after a while; "I imagine her tall and slight, with very black

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hair and grey eyes which had a dark rim, a black ribbon round her beautiful neck, ear-rings with a blood-red stone which is really nothing but glass——"

"By the bye," said he suddenly, interrupting her, "I have long been meaning to ask you why *you* never wear any ear-rings, or ornaments of any kind?"

"Because I am too poor to get large diamonds and real pearls, and I don't care for anything else."

"Too poor!"

"Yes, indeed, much too poor—much poorer than you have any idea of; in any case poorer than Dorothea, who possessed what is always boasted of as the greatest treasure, *i.e.* content. I, on the contrary— Do you think that I should have looked upon it as a blessing to be Frau Hermann?"

"If you had been in love with him."

She looked quietly at him, as if to find out whether he were in earnest.

"You are a curious person," she said. "In spite of your wisdom you are very stupid, and you take no notice of anything which does not fit into your system. How often have I to explain to you that I have no idea of what you call being in love? And do you know, as for your Dorothea, though she was invented and endowed with a soul by—a poet (and being in love plays such an important part in the opinion of poets), I can find in her no traces of this curious state. She comes across a young man who wishes to take her out of the road into his house, and to make her his wife. As he seems good and true, and to promise to be a regular pattern husband, why should she say no? especially as she seems to have no objection to the parson, the apothecary, and all the rest of them. That is just why I envy her. I, on the contrary— But do throw a little more wood on the fire, it is nearly out."

He did as she asked, and was kneeling before the fire in order to blow up a blaze with the pretty little

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bellows, when a noise of voices which arose in the hall made him stop to listen. The tearful voice of little Jean was distinctly to be heard in animated opposition to a powerful bass. The door of the ante-room was now thrown open, the contending parties approached the little drawing-room, a burst of laughter with which the stranger pushed aside the boy, who tried to prevent him from entering, then a knock at the door, the answer to which was not even waited for, but a tall fellow in the rich livery of a jäger entered with an air of the utmost confidence, as if he were quite at home.

The young lady sat up hastily and gazed at the intruder in speechless terror. Edwin also rose from his knees with the bellows still in his hand, and was just on the point of addressing the jäger, when the latter drew a letter out of his pocket, and, with an elegant bow to Toinette, laid it on the little table which stood before the sofa.

"Beg pardon if I have disturbed you, miss," said he, casting an impertinent glance at Edwin, "but my lord's order was to give this note into your own hands."

"Did my servant not tell you—" broke in Toinette.

"That his mistress was not at home, yes, he did, and that she would receive no notes; that she did not wish for the acquaintance of my master, the count, as she had shown by not answering the letters which his lordship has sent by post——"

"Leave the room at once," broke with difficulty from the deadly pale lips of the girl, "and if you ever dare to come back again and to force your way in, I shall know how to protect myself in my own house."

"The gnädige Fräulein," returned the insolent fellow, with a grin of derision, "will allow that the house is his who pays for it. If my noble master approves of his servant being turned out of the house, and of

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the door being shut on him, when his lordship is, so to say, the proprietor——"

"Rascal!" burst forth from Edwin. "Did you not hear what the lady ordered you to do? I have not the honour of knowing your master, but if he is a gentleman it cannot be his wish that a lady should be insulted by such an impudent knave."

The man measured the speaker from top to toe with cool insolence.

"And I, sir, have not the honour of knowing you. But as regards my conduct, my lord has alone the right to call me impudent. There is the letter, and now I may go, as I have done my errand. As to insulting the lady, it never entered my head, it would be quite against orders. But as for any strange man——"

Edwin involuntarily raised the little article he held in his hand, the next moment he recollected himself. The bellows fell from his hand; he pushed by the jäger, opened the drawing-room door, and said in a loud voice, looking firmly at the suddenly intimidated individual, "Leave the room!"

The jäger only hesitated a moment, then bowing to Toinette, he retired slowly. "I shall tell my lord," said he, at the door, "that you have no time to answer his letters because you are taken up with a visit from a gentleman. Good evening!"

Edwin closed the door with a bang after him. They heard the fellow laughing loudly outside, and jesting with Jean on the way out, as if nothing had happened. In the little salon there was complete silence. The beautiful maiden, with her eyes firmly fixed on the unfortunate note, which still lay unopened on the table, with her white hands folded in her lap, sat motionless on the sofa. Edwin stood at the door, his hand still raised menacingly, as it had been when he turned out this insolent intruder. Only when he heard the outer door closed did he move suddenly, as

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if to shake something off, and walked quietly up to the silent one.

"Would you be so kind as to explain this scene to me, Fräulein?" said he, in a voice from which all excitement had disappeared. Then, as she did not reply at once, "May I hope that you will present me to this count one of these days? He seems to have some sort of right to expect that you should read his letters."

She still remained silent. At last she timidly raised her eyes to him and looked at him imploringly. The look reached his very soul.

"If I were to beg you to ask no more questions, to trust mé as you have hitherto done?"

"I should make no objection," he answered, in an undertone, "but I should take my leave and never return."

"Why?"

"Because I will not go out and in of a house without knowing who is its master. I should not wish to expose myself to the possibility of the *master's* making his appearance here one day instead of the servant, and of his explaining to me that he did not approve of your receiving visits from gentlemen."

She appeared to be reflecting for a moment. "You are right, my friend," said she. "I owe it to you —nay, to myself to explain all this to you. What must you think of me? But not to-day. I cannot tell you this long miserable story here. It is long past your usual hour too; it is nearly night. Come to-morrow morning at eleven to the gold-fish pond in the Thiergarten where the statue is. It is a very quiet spot about that time; I have sometimes sat there in the shade with my book, and hardly three people have gone by. There I will tell you everything. If the knowledge of your friend's commonplace prosaic history should spoil the charm of our mutual hide and seek, that will be your own fault.

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Now take this unlucky note with you and keep it for me till the morning, so that even to-day you may have a pledge of my sincerity. To-morrow we will read it together."

She stood up and put out her hand to him, which he, absorbed in gloomy thoughts, took and held fast.

"I want no pledge," said he; "perhaps indeed it would be better if I were to——"

"——take leave of you for ever," he meant, but he had not the courage to say it. He looked into her eyes, which were as unembarrassed, nay, which sparkled as cheerfully as ever. He mechanically took the note which she held out to him. Then he stooped over her hand and kissed it—long and passionately—the first time that he had touched her cool smooth fingers with his lips.

"Till to-morrow," said he. "Keep your word."

"Yes," she answered, with a smile, "even if the sky were to fall during the night. However, sleep peacefully. What I have to tell you is only worth knowing so long as you have not heard it. Oh, my friend, I am afraid you will regret having broken the spell by your questions, when to-morrow the fairy tale comes to an end, and Cinderella is again sitting in her ashes!"

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CHAPTER III.

When Edwin returned home soon after this, and passed Christiane's door on his way up the steep stairs, he heard loud eager voices, but it was a relief to him to hear neither the voice of Mohr nor of Franzelius in the "tub." He was longing to have his brother to himself for an hour. The surprise was therefore all the more unwelcome with which he found Balder, as usual, in the company of his friends: Mohr sitting opposite to him, before the chess-board, which was placed on a corner of the turning lathe, in order that the players might profit by the last rays of light. A bottle of Rhine wine, of which he had laid down a little in the cellar of the house, so as not to drink every evening at the expense of the brothers, stood near him on the window-seat, and so taken up was he with the wine, the chess, and the smoke of his cigarette, that he hardly noticed Edwin's entrance.

Franzelius had seated himself in the middle of the room astride upon a chair, on the back of which he had placed his large hands and leant his chin, while his gloomy eyes were immovably fixed on the bust of Demosthenes which stood on the book-case. He also hardly turned his head towards the new-comer, and the greeting which he did vouchsafe was more like the growling of a house-dog than any human sound.

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Edwin was no more inclined for conversation than the others. He stood for a moment behind his brother's chair, passed his hand more than once over his thick hair, and then seated himself at his desk, where he apparently began to read some newspapers. Only once did he turn to the players, and said—

"It would really be better, Heinrich, if you were to sacrifice your Latakia, which is horribly strong, on the altar of friendship. The time for open windows has gone by, and Balder has already coughed twice."

Mohr opened the window at once, and threw the cigarette into the yard. Then they were all four silent till Balder stood up and said, "To be check-mated more than five times running is really more than one can expect from a wooden king. Anyhow, it is hopeless trying to beat you. You are a master."

"Yes, in chess I am worth something!" laughed Mohr contemptuously, as he threw the chess-men, which had been turned by Balder, into the box. "Master of an art in which the most commonplace heads are often the greatest virtuosi. It is still a question whether a talent for chess is not after all a kind of disease, a hypertrophy of the sense of combination. Don't you see, Edwin, if this organ were quite normal in me, for example, I should have done more with the drama. Thus I propose to you the most beautiful chess problems in five acts, and then when I look at them by daylight they are nothing but wooden figures, not living creatures at all. Pshaw! I here vow not to touch a knight or a bishop for a month till I have got through my comedy."

He emptied his glass, and then slowly poured out what remained of the bottle. "By the bye, good evening, Edwin. It is long since we have had the pleasure of seeing you here. Indeed it seems that to-night you are much in the same boat as our philanthropist, who has not yet said ten words; your thoughts seem equally far away from the 'tub.'"

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The printer rose with a violent jerk from his riding posture, and passing both his hands through his bushy hair, said—

"It is quite true; I have felt for a long time that I am quite superfluous here. Therefore, and for quite another reason— But I do hope that our *sentiments* remain unchanged."

"What are you fancying now?" asked Edwin, still occupied with his papers.

Balder had limped up to Franzelius, whose hand he took. "I was just going to ask you, Reinhold," said he softly, "to come sometimes in the morning; then you would find me alone, and your last essay——"

The other turned away. "No," said he, "it will be better, wiser, to put an end to it. I am glad too that Edwin has come back. I wanted to say it before, but you were so occupied with your game. To-day I must take leave of you; for how long is doubtful."

"Fools call it for ever," quoted Mohr. "What the devil is come to you, Caius Franzelius? Are you going to found a working colony among the red-skins on the Schulze-Delitzsch method? Or are you on your way to the salt lakes of Utah, in order to disgust the Mormons with immortality? Or—come, I have it—he cannot bear the sight of a man who drinks Rhine wine while the camel in the desert of Sahara often cannot find even a puddle."

The printer seemed on the point of replying angrily when Edwin interposed.

"Of course," said he, "you must know what you are about. If you separate yourself from old friends, a commodity not to be bought in every market, you must have reasons for the step. It would be friendly, Franzel, to tell us what they are. Perhaps they may be less valid than you fancy."

"Thank you, Edwin," replied the other, in a faltering voice. "It does me good to hear that the cessation of our intercourse would not be quite a matter of

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indifference to you, however little it may have profited us the last few weeks. As regards my reasons——"

"Again I say I am ready to take myself off if less publicity be desired," interrupted Mohr quietly, rising as he spoke.

"It is not a personal matter at all," continued the gloomy one. "Though we two do not understand one another, and it is sometimes far from pleasant to be the target for your jests, yet that would hardly suffice to keep me altogether away from the 'tub.' No, the business is somewhat more serious. In two words, then, I have made up my mind to start a newspaper in which I may confess and defend my opinions more emphatically and openly than is possible in a pamphlet. The paper will appear twice a week, and is to be called 'The Tribune.' Many thanks, Mohr, for this nickname; you gave it to me in mockery. I shall do as the 'Beggars' did with theirs—make it into a name of honour. My programme is, to break with superstition and tradition, and as the rich have good reasons for preserving the traditions which trouble the water in which they wish to fish, I shall expressly address myself to the poor and miserable. I recognize this as my vocation, to which I am ready to sacrifice everything—everything," he repeated, looking at Balder, but immediately afterwards casting down his eyes as if in search of his cap.

The brothers remained silent; Mohr, however, went up to him, and laying both his hands on his shoulders, said—

"Listen, Franzel; though you do not like me, I feel compelled to express my respect for you before these witnesses. I envy you for having a vocation, though I do look upon yours as regular folly. But do alter your title. Your readers will hardly be sufficiently up in Roman history to be quite clear as to the difference between 'tribune' and 'tribüne.'*

* Tribüne, *i.e.* pulpit.

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Besides, why should we lose the pleasure of your society for this? Indeed I offer myself as fellow-labourer, if, as I hope, you mean to have a *feuilleton*. I should not mind contributing a few piquant aphorisms."

"A truce to your jests!" interrupted Edwin, impatiently. "Franzel, what does it all mean? Because you are founding a newspaper why should you bid us farewell as if we were never to meet again? You must of course do what you think right. Are we to be our brother's keeper? Or have we hitherto been in any danger of arrest for each word of yours to which we have been unable to subscribe?"

"No," answered the printer, burying his large hands in his pockets, "but that is the very reason; for the future also you must be safe, as far as I can manage it. I know only too well that we are no longer of one mind as we used to be years ago. But I am resolved to burn my ships; no more evasions or half-words. That will not be endured by the gentlemen at the helm. There will be a row; they will interfere in their usual rough way—arrest, searchings, seizure of papers, hunting for accomplices. I do not choose that you—for I go nowhere as often as to you."

"They may seal up all my papers," said Mohr, drily. "At all events the mediocrity of which they give culpable evidence is not dangerous to the state. On the contrary, the less talent one has, the more useful one is as a tax-paying individual, as a sheep of the flock."

Franzelius seized his cap.

"You will not bring that upon us," said Balder. "At all events wait till it does happen. What would they find here? As far as I know, Edwin——"

"I too should see them come with perfect calmness," said Edwin, smiling. "No, Franzel, you are really seeing ghosts, at least as far as we are concerned. If it comes to the worst, can you not swear that I have no inclination towards social democracy, that I

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am rather an incorrigible aristocrat, as you have often enough reproached me with being?"

"And if they examine you as to your catechism, will you repudiate it? Will you not rather confess that we are agreed as to principles, and only differ as to whether the time be ripe yet? You are silent. Now don't you see——"

"Scientific convictions are somewhat different from democratic speechifyings, and, thank God, the police no longer interfere with the freedom of thought of a *privat docent* of philosophy. But as we are again on the subject, and as it seems for the last time, do you consider me a coward, Franzel?"

"You! how can you?"

"Or don't you believe that I would rather be drawn and quartered than deny the spirit of our cause? Very well then; if you look upon me as a man of whose friendship you have no need to be ashamed, let me tell you that your purpose seems to me as injudicious as if you were to place a roast chicken before a toothless infant, instead of its mother's milk, or Liebig's preparation, on which he has hitherto been fed. If any one were to do so to a child of mine, I should forbid him the house, or at all events try to render the premature diet innocuous."

"You speak like that because you don't know the people," burst forth Franzelius. "They are no longer children, they have teeth, and hair on their teeth too,* and where that is not the case we will help them on, will provide them with hard meats so that they may cut their teeth, instead of cooking the traditional pap, instead of continually rocking them to sleep with lullabies and rubbish about angels' wings, when they are becoming men and leaving behind the leading-strings of minority."

"Don't excite yourself unnecessarily," said Edwin, interrupting him. "Which of us wishes to hinder

* To have hair on one's teeth means to be born with one's eyes open

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the natural growth of the intellect, instead of furthering it with all our might? But what you wish for is an unnatural premature culture; your demagogic enthusiasm acts like hot-house heat; and therefore I repeat again, do not make unnecessary sacrifices, which must not only harm you yourself, but also your foster-children. An Apollo cannot be carved out of every block of wood, every individual who dons a leathern apron and eats his bread in the sweat of his brow is not capable of grasping the idea of mother Eve's fall which a disciple of Spinoza or of Kant would have of it. Why do you wish, when there are so many crying evils of a more vulgar sort which require attention, to *create* wants for these our less-gifted brethren? Why prove to them in the first instance that something is lacking, in order afterwards, when with difficulty they have begun to feel the want, to provide them with a very questionable makeshift? You produce an artificial thirst, and have then nothing but a pear to offer with which to assuage it; for the springs which flow for us are, as things now stand, closed to them for a good while yet."

"Edwin is right," cried Mohr, for the first time without the ironical quiver in the corner of his mouth. "The people sleep and dream of various things, and Franzelius Gracchus goes about, like Macbeth, and murders sleep. I never could understand how any man could be so inhuman as to wake any one who sleeps. But there, one may preach humanity to these humanitarians! You are just as selfish as the parsons and the schoolmen. Just in order to be able to light your own candle, you drum mankind out of bed at three o'clock."

"And supposing they are grateful to us," cried the printer, vehemently, "as they would be if they have been troubled by nightmare or bad dreams! And that is indeed the case with the people. Their sleep under the nightcap of superstition is no longer refresh-

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ing and dreamless as it was a hundred years ago. They have been half roused by various voices, now they are resting in the twilight without knowing whether it be time to get up. But why do I talk of it to you? You know nothing of the times, you have never felt the pulse of humanity trembling through your own heart; with all your clever knowledge and your good will, you are——"

"Say no more, Franzel," whispered Balder; "you are excited. Why should we say hard words just as we are about to part, if we really are to part? But that we shall meet again, and before very long, I feel convinced."

"We—you—I can never lose you!" murmured Franzelius, in a tone of glowing emotion which was only audible to Balder. "You are right," added he aloud. "It is sad enough that one's paths should diverge; one need not make the inevitable still harder. Farewell, Edwin! I could almost envy you your capability of keeping to yourself what you feel to be an intellectual possession, for of course they 'Who their full hearts unguardedly reveal'd——'* However, it does not matter: aliis inserviendo consumor. Good-bye, Mohr. With you——"

He was going to add something, but changed his mind and left the room. Outside he waited a moment as if in expectation of something more. He was not mistaken. Balder followed him under the pretext of having still something to say. But he only pressed his hand in silence, then fell on his neck, and immediately afterwards tore himself away, while Franzelius stumbled down the stairs like a man whose head is heavy or whose eyes are closed.

"He is following his demon," said Edwin, shaking his head. "I have long seen it coming, and have tried in vain to keep it off. But water must flow downhill."

"It will soon come to a sluice, and be stopped for

* Wer thöricht genug sein volles Herz nicht wahrte."—*Faust.*

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a good bit," grumbled Mohr. "It is a pity, for he is a good fellow. Believe me, Edwin, it was painful to myself to feel impelled to chaff him so incessantly. In reality I not only respected but liked him. He has just what I want; he only thinks of himself as one among many, and because he has no wish to be of importance individually he is quite indifferent about himself. He is satisfied to be as he is. I believe if he did consider himself anything out of the way he would be the first to ostracize himself. Happy ephemera!"

Balder came back into the room, and they talked of other things. Mohr inquired after the lessons which Edwin was giving to the young "Zaunprincess," as Lea was called in the "tub." But Edwin's thoughts were again occupied with the mysterious confession he was to receive on the following day, and he answered absently that he was giving her a lecture on the history of philosophy, entirely from the result of his own studies; that he was teaching her without technical expressions how differently the mystery of the world has been shadowed forth to different intellects, how thoughtful spirits have tried to explain it, and to express the unutterable in formulas which have grown more and more profound. "I have only got as far as the doctrine of ideas," he concluded, "which will be a great enjoyment and without special difficulty for a clever, thoughtful girl such as she is. I wonder how we shall get on with Aristotle. It is, however, only another confirmation of the proposition that where there is real need there are always the corresponding organs, just as hunger can only be felt by a creature who has a stomach. It is quite a pleasure to see this young girl listening. She has long pined for knowledge, and now she is reviving like a thirsty plant in summer rain."

"My best wishes for the Frau doctorin," laughed Mohr.

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Involuntarily the two brothers glanced at one another.

"You hear we are still busy with Plato," said Edwin, forcing himself to joke. "Whether my pupil, in spite of her studies in hedge and lagoon, can rise high enough to appreciate our 'tub' philosophy I very much doubt."

Meantime Franzelius, going as slowly as if each step cost him a fresh effort of resolution, had only just got as far as the front house. When he came to the glass door which led into the shop he suddenly stood quite still.

On the chair behind the shop window on which Madame Feyertag generally sat enthroned, Reginchen was seated to-day. It had grown very dark in this corner, for in summer the gas was never lighted in the shop, and according to the Feyertag calendar September was a summer month. The printer had, however, discovered at the first glance from without who it was sitting in the corner, knitting a large stocking. He seemed to struggle with himself for a moment; then he lifted the latch and entered the shop, saying—

"Good evening, Fräulein Reginchen."

"Good gracious, how you frightened me!" exclaimed the girl, springing from her seat.

"I beg your pardon," stammered Franzelius; "I ought to have knocked. But my head is so full of thoughts. Please don't move, Fräulein Reginchen; I —I—only wanted—I am come——"

He grasped his cap convulsively and dusted the brim with his elbow.

"Mother is out," said Reginchen, in order to make a little conversation. "Father is still in the workshop. Perhaps you want to speak to him?"

"Oh no, not at all; but let me——"

He picked up a knitting-needle which she had dropped; in doing so let his cap fall, and as she

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stooped to look for it their heads met not over gently. He grew painfully red, but she burst into a clear peal of laughter.

"That is because the days are getting so short," said she. "Father is so sparing with the gas, and so I drop lots of stitches."

Then they were silent for a while.

At last the printer spoke, placing himself before the cupboard containing ladies' shoes, and staring into it as fixedly as if he wished to count the pairs.

"You are happy, Fräulein Reginchen. You are going to remain here. I—I after to-day——"

"You are going on a journey, Herr Franzelius?"

"No, Fräulein Reginchen; or rather yes. It is all the same. I—I am so glad to have met you again. I wished—I should not like to have gone away without saying good-bye."

"Shall you be away so *very* long then?"

"I don't know at all. Perhaps I shall never return. Fräulein Reginchen, I cannot hope—do you see, I—I have always had a feeling of reverence for you."

Again her clear childish laughter broke forth, but if it had not been so dark in the shop he might have seen had he looked at her that she had blushed scarlet.

"Jeminy!" said she. "Reverence! Nobody ever felt reverence for me. A stupid thing like me, who can do nothing, as mother tells me every day——"

"You do not know your own worth, Reginchen, which is the best proof that—I mean that it is real worth. Forgive me for saying it so boldly to your face. It is the first, and indeed the last time. And you—of course if I come here no more you will not think of me any more."

The child seemed wise enough to know that silence is very often the best answer. She coughed once or twice, and at last said—

"Where are you going to?"

"Wherever the winds and waves carry me," he

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answered, with gloomy pathos, as he walked up and down the shop with heavy steps.

"What, by sea? Good gracious! But then I shall be frightened. How anxious I shall feel when there is an east wind, when the windows clatter and the gas shivers, to think that you are on the water!"

"Will you really, Fräulein Reginchen?" he asked quickly, standing still before her. "If you were serious—but no, why should you have unnecessary anxiety about a man who will never— But indeed it will be a real comfort to me on my way. But I wanted to say I should like to take something away with me to remind me of you and this hour."

"Of me?" She looked involuntarily at her knitting, at which he was also staring.

"I have only got as far as the heel," said she. "I am afraid you will not be able to wait till it is finished."

"No, Fräulein Reginchen," said he; "pray do not think that I should be so bold as to ask for such a present as that which you have made with your own hands. But, perhaps among your father's—I have a very clumsy foot, and I fear ready-made boots would hardly fit me."

"I could take your measure."

"Of course you could; but no, Reginchen, I should not like you to do such a thing for me."

"I would willingly do it; I am quite accustomed to it."

"No, no; a girl such as you are and an unlucky fellow like myself— But if—if a ready-made pair could be found."

He looked all round him at the walls, sighed, passed his hands through his hair, and appeared anxious to avoid her eye at any cost.

"You have not a very small foot," said the girl at last, looking with the air of a connoisseur at his thick boots. "If it was only longer for its width. But it will be difficult."

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"Just so! Two feet like elephants'," said the printer, laughing bitterly. "We who belong to the people hardly need such large feet, for we are oftener trodden upon than the other way. But it will do no harm; who knows when it may be our turn. Very well, Fräulein Reginchen, if it is impossible——"

"Wait a minute," she cried, springing up and opening the inside pane of the shop window; "there may be something here which would do, especially if you needed water boots. But if you are going by sea——"

"Through thick and thin, at all events. But pray show me the water boots, Fräulein Reginchen."

He seated himself on a low stool and looked at her as she bent over the goods in the window, and with some trouble dexterously extricated two great Wellington boots which had been placed there as samples, and set them down in the shop. Then he sighed again, as if in the deepest grief. He did not utter a syllable as with Reginchen's help he drew on one after another the well-fitting boots, which as a matter of fact were much too large. At last when he stood before her, as if rooted in those huge shining cases, he drew forth his blue checked handkerchief, wiped his brow with it, and said, as he thrust it slowly back into his pocket—

"Ask your father to send me my old boots with the bill. And now, Fräulein Reginchen, one more thing: please go on looking after my friends up there, Balder especially; he—perhaps you hardly are aware of it—he will never be very old; but as long as he does live, nothing but kindness should——"

He turned away because his voice failed him, and secretly wiped his eyes with his cap.

"Oh no!" cried the girl, in alarm; "what are you saying? Herr Walter——"

"Hush!" said Franzelius, putting his broad forefinger to his lips. "You are a good sensible girl, and will keep it to yourself. Oh, Fräulein Reginchen, if

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it were not so, if many things of which you have no idea were different from what they are, heaven knows I—I should not conceal my feelings, but I should tell you. But no! As long as this one man, and such a friend— You must love him, Reginchen, as much as you can. Will it be difficult for you to love Balder?"

She was again silent; the question appeared to her a dangerous one. He observed her with a curious expression of anxiety and passion, and suddenly seizing both her hands in his great paws, he pressed them so hard that she had difficulty in suppressing a scream, while he burst forth with the words: "If there were angels you would be one. Good-bye—think—don't forget. You never had a truer friend than me. That is what I wanted to say before we part, Fräulein Reginchen."

He tore himself away, and stalked out in his giant's boots as hastily as if he feared to remain longer, lest he should lose his centre of gravity in spite of those firm supports, and fall at the feet of the shoemaker's daughter.

Reginchen looked after him through the shop window. She had often laughed at him, but to-day she felt no inclination for laughter, she was nearer crying. No man had ever spoken to her in this way before. That she pleased him had been for some time apparent to her, indeed she had piqued herself a good deal upon it, for she believed that he must be wonderfully clever, as he had so much to do with printing. But that he should feel "reverence" for her, and say she was almost an angel—and what could he have meant about Herr Walter?

She reseated herself on her chair in the corner.

"Before to-morrow I will knit him a pair of stockings for his journey," thought she, "if I can only get them done; but he has such very big feet!"

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CHAPTER IV.

At this moment Lorinser was sitting in Christiane's room on the little leather sofa, with his knees drawn up, and his long arm hanging over the back, like some one who, having every intention of remaining where he is, thinks it quite worth his while to make himself comfortable. Though it was so dark that it was scarcely possible to distinguish faces, there was as yet no lamp on the little table. A faint light shone across from the front house, which from time to time as it moved fell on the pale face of the man on the sofa. Then one might have seen the strongly-marked features working with some violent excitement. Each time that the light passed over Lorinser's features, the curious smile on the mobile lips became visible, and the eyes fell, which so long as it remained dark followed Christiane's movements with the sharpest power of vision as she walked up and down in the room, her arms as usual crossed over her breast.

Now she suddenly stopped before the window, opened it for a moment, drew a deep breath, and then turned to the silent man on the sofa.

"How one forgets the time when one is talking!" said she. "I had not noticed how dark it had become. You must excuse me, Herr Candidat, but my time is divided so regularly——"

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"You want me to go, Fräulein Christiane," said he, without the least sign of any intention of moving from his place; "but your musical revelations, which have opened up to me depths of which I had no conception, have quite put the real object of my visit out of my head. What answer am I to take to the baroness?"

"Need I send any answer?" she inquired. "Why should I have told you all that music is to me, if it had not been to show you that I never could train pupils for the drawing-room. I would rather starve than take part in the universal sin of profaning that which is holy to me by jingling and strumming."

"And yet you condescend to teach a soubrette from a theatre?"

"How do you know that?"

"Because—well, because I have made inquiries about you. I must be able to answer for those whom I would introduce into houses such as that of the baroness."

"Very well, then, I will confess to you why I have taken this frivolous being on my hands, from a motive into which you will thoroughly enter, as it is indeed the mission you had taken up—in order to save a soul."

"You intend to turn a theatre princess who has already passed through so many hands into a saint? You are joking!"

Christiane laughed a short hard laugh which did not sound at all cheerful.

"What do you take me for?" she asked, "am I likely to try and make some one that which I neither am nor wish to be? And what does it matter to me what sort of life she leads? I let every one be happy in his own way. What I call saving her soul is to give her an idea of real music. The girl has very good parts, voice, ear, passion, a real feeling for music which enables her in all compositions to grasp the personality of the master or of the part, so that she does not

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merely repeat the notes, but expresses it all as if she were living in it. Do you know, that is rare, even with great artists, or many who call themselves great artists, and expect to be paid as such. This theatre princess, as you choose to call her, is therefore too good for Offenbach, and is perfectly worthy of making closer acquaintance with Mozart and other great ones."

"And if you succeed, shall you have made her happier by saving her soul?"

"Who knows? At all events I shall have done all that lies in my power. Happy indeed! If music alone could make one happy, who would be happier than I? But music is after all only a substitute; perhaps the most powerful and the noblest, but is still far from being true happiness itself. I am quite clear about that; I have had time enough to know it by experience."

"And what do you consider true happiness?"

She was silent a moment, not as if in difficulty about her answer, but rather as if she were considering whether she owed any answer to *this* questioner. Then suddenly, in a tone of quiet resignation:

"True happiness? I only know what it must be by never having enjoyed it. True happiness can only consist in the giving up of one's being without losing it, because one finds it again in another who is better than oneself; in fact, in utter self-forgetfulness which can bring with it no feeling of shame, because that other can think of nothing but that which one forgets oneself. You will not understand me, and it does not matter. I will light the lamp."

"You are speaking of love," said he, quietly. "I understand you, because the same happiness which you hope to find in earthly love is revealed to the children of God in the voluptuousness of eternity. Did I not tell you the other day that you must lose yourself in order to find yourself again in God? that

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there is no other redemption? Now you are meeting me half way."

"I shall never be able to go the rest of the way," she replied, drily. "Pray don't return to that subject. Once more, it is late. I must work."

Still he did not move from his cowering posture in the corner of the sofa.

"Why should you not speak out?" said he, with composure. "Your nature is noble, you are no ordinary woman. Where it is a question of your life's happiness, why these half hints, these shame-faced, prudish evasions? Perhaps I could really help you."

"You? No man can help me."

"But God can, and he who leads you to Him."

"I do not understand you. Have I not told you with sufficient distinctness that I feel no longing for your God nor for His redeeming grace. All that I can do is not to hate Him for having placed me as I am in this world."

"As you are! And how is that?"

"You yourself have just said: no ordinary woman. I hardly know what could be sadder for a girl. Indeed it is only since I have felt the improbability of there being any truth in the story of God, and have seen that we poor human animals form part of the vast swarm of creation without possessing more claim to any particularly tender treatment than the thistles in the field which the ass chews, or the ass which the miller's lad belabours—only since then have I had something like peace. Now I need feel a grudge against no one, unless against my parents—who have been dead a long time—for the fact of my being a joyless, ugly old maid with the features of a man; the poor things did not know what they were doing when they gave life to *me!*"

She uttered all this in a harsh, contemptuous tone, as if relating something which had long ago been a subject of bitter annoyance to her. All the time she

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was occupied in lighting the lamp with the green glass, and she now placed it on the table.

"You have now heard enough, I think," she added, drily. "You must be quite convinced that a scabby sheep like myself would make a very bad figure among the gentle flocks which you tend. So I hope that for the future you will give yourself no trouble either about my temporal or eternal welfare."

"Indeed I have heard enough," returned Lorinser, turning his eyes so suddenly on her that the metallic brightness of their whites, deadened by the green light of the lamp, made her uncomfortable; "though in reality you have told me nothing more than I knew at the first glance. You are mistaken if you think that such confessions are new to me, or repel me. They are always the result of a peculiarly strong nature, and grace can only work where there is strength. Soft, dependent natures have nothing to stake, and therefore nothing to gain. Your inward life is quite clear to me, but it is of great importance that you should reveal to me, if I inspire you with sufficient confidence, the outward circumstances which have made you—no, I should rather say, in spite of which you have remained what you were from the beginning. I mean the history of your life."

"My history?" She gave a short laugh. "I have none, or such as I have I have already related to you. My *face* is my history; my dark eyebrows and the shade on my upper lip are my fate. I am very much what my father was, but he was considered a handsome, interesting man. It would have been much wiser if I had copied my mother's face, who, without being celebrated for her beauty, must have been just what I am not—a true woman. At all events quite late in life she made more than one innocent conquest. I, on the contrary, though I was not stupid, neither had I unwomanly manners—I mean when I was a young girl, for now I boldly carry myself as an old student—

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though my talent gained me notoriety among my father's associates (he was a member of the court band)—I have never in all my life made a conquest. That is to say, I had two or three offers of marriage, but they were what I might have expected. One man wanted to give concerts with me; another, and he was no longer young, and had grown weary of his dissolute bachelor life, needed a housekeeper, and did not seem to object to her being repulsive-looking. I dare say he thought that he should be all the more secure of her faithfulness, or expected self-sacrificing gratitude for having married her. The third—but why should I tell you these disgusting stories, which are most humiliating to me? I ought to have learnt from them that which my looking-glass was never tired of teaching; but, on the contrary, I was always mad enough to set my heart secretly on the handsomest, the most agreeable, the most spoilt men, who never even cast an eye at me. The blood of an artist was in my veins, and so I could not help feeling ecstasy at all that was charming, lovely, or amiable, even if it should break my heart. So I reached my four and thirtieth year. The foolish cravings of youth for heartache, for longing hopes and fears,* for honey which turns to gall, might by degrees have been deadened. Do you want any more of my history? I am sorry that I can tell you nothing of love adventures, of broken vows, or of aberrations from the path of virtue. I say I am sorry, for a few blood-red spots washed out with a thousand tears would have been a change in the dismal grey of my days and years. Instead of which I am an old maid in the strongest sense of the word, and the 'magic of sin' of which you speak has no power over my beggarly pride. Can you imagine an interesting, exciting novel with *such* a frontispiece?"

She suddenly took the green shade from the lamp,

* "Langen und bangen."—*Egmont.*

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which she lifted up to her face, turning then to him with her features in its full glare.

"That is a matter of taste," he answered, without moving a muscle. "For my part, I have always preferred characteristic faces to smooth insignificant ones, however lovely and irresistible they might usually be considered. Superficial sweetness is always repulsive to me. To feel strength, bitterness, yes, even icy scorn and hatred melting in the fire of passion, always seemed to me something more to be desired than the sentimental blending of two congenial souls. The woman who is to attract me must have something of the demon in her. Please put down the lamp again, Fräulein Christiane. It is shining on charms which circumstances might render dangerous, and as in the mean time I am quite indifferent to you——"

At this moment the bell outside was pulled violently.

"You may be thankful for this interruption," said Christiane, in a suppressed voice, as if fearful that she might be heard outside; "otherwise I should perhaps have answered you in a tone that might have appeared even to you too unwomanly. Now you may go, without anything further, and indeed——"

The bell sounded for the second time. Lorinser had put down his knees from the sofa, but did not seem willing to quit his corner.

She cast an indescribable look of astonishment and disgust at him, and then went into the ante-room with the lamp in order to open the door. Outside stood Mohr; his face was very red, and as soon as the door was open his eyes sought to penetrate into the darkness of the room; nevertheless he appeared quite sure of himself, indeed his manner was almost formal.

"I beg a thousand pardons, Fräulein, for knocking a second time, at such an unseasonable hour, at your door. But though I know it is most unceremonious, I am sure that as an artist you will forgive me, when

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I tell you the object of my visit. Can you listen to me for a quarter of an hour? You are engaged?" he continued, as if suddenly noticing the man's figure at the other side of the next room. "All the better then; the unseasonableness of the hour will be done away with. May I come in? There is a terrible draught on this staircase. Or perhaps I shall disturb you?"

"Not in the least," she answered, bowing slightly, but with gloomy looks. "I have not indeed the honour of knowing you."

"As a friend of your fellow-lodgers in the 'tub,' I thought I had a kind of claim to make acquaintance with you. Just lately I made an unlucky attempt—I might have been a raw student—my friend Edwin tried to keep me from it. You could scarcely have been so hard on me as I was on myself as soon as I recollected myself."

"Sir, I do not remember——"

"So much the better. It was pretty dark at the time on the landing. Allow me to introduce myself to you this evening by lamplight. Heinrich Mohr, nothing further. I was above procuring the title of doctor by paying for it. A man who is distinguished in nothing may at least have this distinction——"

"Will you be so kind as to tell me——"

She still continued standing in the ante-room with her lamp in her hand, as if anxious to despatch him as soon as possible, while he, from time to time, threw glances of excitement into the sitting-room.

"I will go straight to the point," said he, leaning against a cupboard which stood close to the door. "What I have to propose to you is no secret, and needs no confidential interview. It is unfortunately only too well known to the few who know of my existence. But will you not sit down, Fräulein? While you are standing—"

He made a movement towards the door of the sitting-room.

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"Thank you, I am not tired."

"Nor I. What I wanted to say is this—I am unfortunately burdened with a variety of mediocre talents. One would be quite enough to make a man wretched, who by the way is no fool, but who possesses tastes which are inexorably fastidious. Bungling is worse in art than in medicine. What do a few mortals more or less signify? while it seems to me that it would be a sin against the Holy Ghost to poison or to ruin one's feeling for art. Don't you think so too, Fräulein?"

She looked at him with wide-open, inquiring eyes but did not say one word.

"But I know," he continued, "that there is also a false humility. Many a great man would never have believed it himself if he had not been *discovered* by his friends. Other talents are, as it were, trampled down in the crowd by malice and envy. Mankind is very envious, Fräulein; Germans particularly so. I allude of course to the common commercial jealousy, which has only about as much connection with ideal, high-minded jealousy as a poisonous fungus has with the truffle. In short, it is difficult for each individual to know what he is worth. That my poetry is no great shakes I am well aware of. But music, music! I play badly on the piano, and sing with a raven's voice, but as regards my powers of invention, I could hold my own with the frivolous composers of valses or of street ballads. You, Fräulein—forgive me for having listened to you—you have filled the quiet courtyard with your musical confessions—I—I have the greatest admiration for your talent, for—how shall I say it?—for the humour full of genius which is expressed in your music. Now, do you see—I have very nearly done—for a long time I have been full of a large composition, which in the mean time I call by a very fanciful name, which is, however, not without point—my *sinfonia ironica*. I must tell you that none of it is written out, but it is all ready in my head, except for the instrumentation.

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Musicians to whom I have now and then played parts of it have been for the most part one-sided disciples of this or that school, and I must confess that none of them seemed capable of fully entering into the spirit of this work. With you it is different. I feel assured that if you would only grant me an hour——"

"Sir," she said, interrupting him, "you over-rate my knowledge and my judgment. I regret very much——"

"I beg that you will not send me away without a hearing. I only ask you to hear the first movement, where the irony is as yet under control and full of pain. It is in C minor, and goes then into the key of F major."

"I never could understand the so-called programme music," she returned, shortly. "I am sure that it would therefore be better——"

"You take exception at the title? Very well then, I will give it up. It shall be nothing but pure music. Let me be condemned during my whole life to hear nothing but Wagner, with a day in each week for Offenbach, if the very first bar does not prove to you that the remainder is at all events worth listening to. You *must* allow me just to play the introduction to you on your piano."

He did not wait for her permission, but advanced quickly into the sitting-room, so that she had nothing for it but to follow him with the lamp.

Lorinser was still sitting in the corner of the sofa. He had cast his eyes up to the ceiling, and seemed absorbed in thought, so that he did not even notice their entrance. Christiane placed the lamp on the table with violence, as if she wished to rouse him by the clatter of the glass.

"Allow me, gentlemen, to introduce you to one another," she said sullenly. "Herr—what was your name?"

"Heinrich Mohr, Fräulein. A hitherto perfectly

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obscure name, which you may perhaps be the means of making known to the world. Besides, an introduction is scarcely necessary. I have already the honour of this gentleman's acquaintance."

The candidate let his piercing eyes rest on the face of the other, and then said indifferently—

"I did not know that I had already had that pleasure."

"Very likely not," continued Mohr, going up to the table, and taking the glass shade off the lamp. "Till now the acquaintance has been all on my side. Indeed, except for a chance meeting on the stairs, it is of very recent date; it only commenced last night."

Lorinser stood up. It apparently made him uncomfortable to be exposed to the glaring light of the lamp.

"Last night?" he said, inquiringly. "It must be some mistake."

"My dear sir," answered Mohr, with friendly animation, "any one with such a striking face as yours may be quite sure that no one can mistake his features. It is true that I only observed you for a few minutes through a ground-floor window——"

"Sir, allow me to observe——"

"I will take any oath that it was you, and in very cheerful society too—in a house in Königstadt. You will remember. You must know, Fräulein, that in one thing I am quite a poet. I prefer night to day. I am in the habit of wandering aimlessly through the streets till after midnight. One does not then observe men only on their brightest side, but if one wishes to study them— And they are so careless! They think that if the curtains only are drawn they are hidden, and may indulge their weaknesses, be they little or be they life-size, as if there were no holes and splits in curtains and blinds, as if an almost imperceptible hole were not sufficient to enable one to overlook a whole room, just as a single word is often enough

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to throw light on the most secret recesses of a human soul."

"A truly poetical occupation to spy behind the curtains," broke in Lorinser, taking up his hat. "Unfortunately you have on this occasion mistaken your man, which I could easily prove if such a trifle were of the least importance, or if Fräulein Christiane could be interested in my doing so. But in the mean time, as you are going to make music, my presence would be superfluous."

He bowed to Christiane, and went towards the door.

She turned to Mohr, who was following the candidate with a glance of malice.

"I must also beg you to leave me for to-day," said she. "If your ironical symphony be not merely a joke, I am always at home in the morning between twelve and one. Allow me to give you a light."

Mohr did not make the slightest effort to obtain indulgence for himself or his composition. The musical object of his visit seemed forgotten, but his eyes showed clearly the satisfaction which he felt at having ejected the other from his corner. He took leave of Christiane with an air of friendly respect, and followed the candidate, who in perfect silence had got as far as the landing.

On the stairs they both remained standing. Lorinser apparently meant to yield the precedence to Mohr.

"Pray do not make way for me," said the latter, with the greatest politeness. "I am really quite at home here. But perhaps you will prefer not to mount these break-neck stairs too often; you might perhaps come to grief. The house where I saw you yesterday was at all events better lighted."

The candidate half turned to him, and said with suppressed anger—

"You are very much mistaken, sir, if you think to intimidate me by such miserable means. I am, more-

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over, quite ignorant of the place where you pretend to have seen me, though your tone makes me imagine that it could not have been in first-rate society. I must confess that I have a thorough contempt for a man who tries to expose another in the presence of a lady, to denounce him as a frequenter of bad houses; he is nothing but a malicious, slanderous spy."

"I thank you with all my heart," answered Mohr, drily. "It would have been rather more serious if you had assured me of your esteem. I will give you another little hint, my dark friend, to light you on your way. Should it be your intention to continue in your present fashion your visits to the lady, who is now quite sufficiently acquainted with you, I should feel obliged to speak a little more clearly. I do not in the least see why I should withhold *my* denunciation of an individual of your stamp who visits workmen's meetings in order afterwards to denounce to the police any speaker who may have displeased him. I have the honour to wish you a very good night."

He pointed out the way across the yard to the candidate, taking off his hat with ironical politeness, but he only followed himself after having heard the creeping step of the other, who as he went had called back in impotent rage: "We must speak of this another time," die away in the hall of the front house. Then he looked up once more at Christiane's window, which was all lighted up. "This time at all events it has not been only a half and half business," said he, cheerfully. "One day she will thank me. This strange woman is a regular trump."

If only he could have seen what the object of his thoughts was now doing, alone in the solitary room!

No sooner were the two men gone away, than, as if to reconsecrate a sanctuary which had been defiled by evil spirits, she hastily took from a drawer a photograph in a carved frame, and placed it as if on an altar on the table, so that the lamp shone full upon it.

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Then she drew a chair before it, and seated herself thereon in order to devote herself to quiet contemplation of the picture. But the stooping posture was uncomfortable; she slipped from the chair on to the ground, where she knelt with her chin resting on the table, her eyes fixed with enthusiastic intensity on the picture. The face in the likeness was very calm, and seemed to ask for no homage; it was the face of our friend—Edwin!

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CHAPTER V.

THE next day began ungenially and sadly. When Edwin went at the hour agreed upon to the Thiergarten, he found it quite empty. A melancholy autumnal rain was falling; the trees, which till now had not lost their belief that it was still summer, hung their heads, and appeared conscious that they could no more hold fast the sunshiny deception than they could their own yellow leaves, which were being washed away by the rain-drops.

Very dismal looked the tank with gold-fish, covered as it was by fallen dry leaves; between which a lazy fish from time to time glanced with its darker red, snapped at a fly, and then returned in a dejected manner to the bottom. The statue of Venus too looked out into the rain as sadly as if she were thinking with a shudder that the time was now approaching when a covering of snow would lay itself on her naked shoulders, and a crow, perched on her diadem, would croak the dismal song of the northern winter into her ear.

"Of course she will not come," said Edwin to himself, after having walked for the second time round the long pond under his umbrella. "The weather is too bad. Perhaps also she knows only too well the

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contents of the count's letter, and it is only a gentle way of getting rid of me. Then—what shall I do then? Did she mean me, I wonder, to open the letter and read what she did not like to tell me?" He drew the note once more from his pocket and re-read the address: "Mademoiselle Antoinette Marchand." "No, if she does not come—has not the courage to come—the fishes down there will have to keep the secret."

At this moment a droschke drove along the road, and drew up before the clearing at the end of the fish-pond. The striped waistcoat sprang from the box and opened the door. Then the beautiful girl, enveloped in a long black silk cloak, the hood of which was drawn over her head as if she had been a nun, alighted, looking more lovely than ever with her mysterious gleaming eyes and slightly red cheeks.

She nodded to Edwin from a distance, and at the same time smiled so utterly without embarrassment, that all his doubts were suddenly dispersed, and he secretly asked her pardon for them.

"I have kept you waiting," she said, as she took his arm and bent under his umbrella. "But it was my coachman who kept me waiting; the weather did not seem to him to be fit for a drive. However, now I am here, and it is all the better that it should rain, for now I shall not be interrupted in my confession, nor my 'wise friend' in shaking his head and moralizing."

"Have I shown you that that is my way?"

"No, but I am afraid that as soon as you know me better— It is true people say, tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner. But how can you understand me? All this time you have thought me God knows what, at all events a being apart, who had good reasons for preserving her incognito. When you have heard how simple everything is, will you not consider it your duty to bring me back into the paths of wisdom and renunciation, which will certainly lead me to an early grave? If I had not known that very well before-

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hand, how gladly would I have told you long ago all that you are now going to hear."

"Try and see," said he, forcing himself to take a jesting tone, "whether I am not better than my reputation. In my own case I should not try to practise the art of renunciation, where I felt that it was a question of a natural right which I must assert, and there is very little of the moralist in me. You have the most absurd respect for a poor *privat docent*. I am acquainted with professors in ordinary of philosophy who have done the most foolish things."

"No, no, no," said she, earnestly, with her eyes fixed on the damp gravel over which she was walking with her light step. "You do not understand. You and I, we are made of different stuff. Can you understand why the little fishes down there should prefer that dark water to the neatest bed of lily or rose leaves that you could offer them? Every creature lives in his own element, but dies in one that is strange to it. You see that I also can philosophize."

She became silent, and walked thoughtfully by his side for some distance, while the solemn boy followed twenty yards behind, carrying a huge umbrella over his large oil-skin hat, and carefully treading in the tiny footmarks made on the ground by his mistress. The droschke waited outside in the road.

Now she stood still for a moment, looked him straight in the face with a roguish glance of her black childlike eyes, and said—

"Before I discover to you whom you now have on your arm, will you not first confess to me what you have thought me?"

"I should not hesitate for one minute," he answered, smiling. "Unfortunately you are unjust to me. You think that I must be foolish enough, because I have betrayed to you the fact of my being a philosopher, to have an opinion about everything. Thank Heaven, I know my advantage better. I am delighted to meet

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with something about which I have no thoughts, but which hushes me in a dream, as beautiful music does, or a bit of nature in spring-time—a bunch of roses. My thoughts—why should I deny it?—have been very much with you, more perhaps than was good, but it never occurred to me to describe you in thought, as if for a bailiff's warrant."

She laughed as they walked further.

"You are only evading me," she said. "However, whatever you have thought of me, whether good or ill, I am neither one nor the other; I am neither a distinguished person, nor a female sharper, nor yet a coiner of false money, but neither more nor less than the child of 'poor but honest parents.' Do you remember when you were a child the name of Marchand, a ballet dancer at the court theatre of Berlin? But how should you? My father—he belonged to the French colony—was in his prime when an unlucky fall from a propelling machine put an end to all his honours and joys in the way of art. He took it so to heart that from that time he could not bear to hear the theatre spoken of, and preferred to retire into voluntary exile in a poor little town in Brandenburg. There he married my mother, and, besides myself, who was the eldest, had three daughters. One of these died young, both the others are happily married, and have become two good burgher housewives. Unhappily it was not so with me. From the very beginning I was unlike the others, and my good mother had a great deal of trouble with me. Perhaps she would have managed me better if she had begun by showing me more love. But though she had the best heart in the world, towards me she was always reserved, severe, and dissatisfied; and as my father only spoilt me the more, you may imagine what sort of education I had. Once it was whispered to me that I was not my mother's child. But though in such a little place nothing remains a secret, and every one is well up in

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scandal about their neighbours, I never discovered the meaning of this whisper, and almost fancy that it was only said in order to explain my mother's coldness to me, which was apparent even to strangers. Perhaps she was jealous of the tenderness which my father showed me, for her aversion increased as years went on, as I increased in beauty, and my father made more and more of me. None of my sisters were like me. You ought to have known my father in order to understand and pardon his adoration of me. As a young man he had passed through the high school of dancing in Paris, and he never lost the impressions of the last splendid days of imperialism. He always wore shoes, powder, and a white necktie, and when he was at his ease he used to tell about Paris, about the court festivals which he had witnessed (of course only from a corner of the gallery), of the duchesses and marchionesses to whom he had given dancing lessons, of their beauty, their grace, of the luxury which surrounded them, and he usually finished with a deep sigh as he looked round our poor little room.

"Ils sont passés, ces jours de fête! This always pained my mother; nor were these perpetual stories much pleasure to my sisters. They had little imagination, and were full of the little joys and sorrows of their daily life; while, on the contrary, these fairy-like descriptions so went to *my* head that I became indifferent to the poor reality. I dreamt of nothing but of splendour and magnificence, of life without any embarrassments, of kings and princes, who paid court to me. I gave the most high-flown names to my dolls, was always practising my French, which my father strongly encouraged, and when once at dinner we all began to talk of what we should like to be, I said, forward thing that I was, ten years old at the time, 'I should like to be a duchess.'

"My mother reproved me for this, saying it was godless pride; I should try to be good and honest, modest

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and diligent. You can very well imagine it all. My father remained quite silent. Afterwards, when I was alone with him, and I was still weeping violently, he drew me to him, kissed me on the eyes, and said simply, 'Sois tranquille, ma mignonne! Tu vas te gâter tes beaux yeux avec ces larmes.' After that, whenever they wanted to tease me, either at home or at school, they used to call me 'Duchess Toinette.' However, I did not much mind, indeed I rather preferred this nickname to the simple 'Toni' which my mother called me.

"In the end, as I increased in understanding, and began to realize the impossibility of living in ducal fashion on my father's pension, I dare say I should have lost this morbid longing for princely luxury, and in time should have learnt as well as my sisters to be satisfied with a modest existence. Unfortunately, however, there was a constant temptation close at hand. Our little town had formerly been governed by a petty prince who had been mediatized* before the memory of man. The family castle still stood in all its splendour on a hill among woods, and could be reached in ten minutes from the gates of our town. The prince himself had died suddenly in his prime when out hunting. His solemn funeral, to which the whole town flocked, was the first memorable spectacle which made any permanent impression on me. Since that time the princess had lived up there with her children, a nice little hereditary prince a few years older than myself and several daughters. Great state was still kept up, and as soon as the year of mourning was over, visits and fêtes made it all as lively as ever.

"We children, of course, only saw it all through the railings of the park, and, when we succeeded in creeping in, through the high windows which looked into

* Many of the petty German princes were "mediatesirt" by Napoleon, *i. e.* deprived of their sovereign power, though left in their castles with princely incomes.

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the garden. But this was more than enough to renew my 'ducal' dreams. The splendid toilettes, the innumerable wax candles, the elegant bows, smiles, whisperings, and courtesies which by peering through the windows I witnessed for hours together regularly intoxicated me. I would have given anything to find myself in the midst of it all, and something within me seemed to say that I should not have been out of place. At all events I never could understand why my sisters grew red and shy if it happened that any of the strange company came to see the little town, and condescended to exchange a few gracious words with us children, as we stood inquisitively at our doors. I always had an answer ready, and made my little curtsey with such composure that more than once the great ladies entered into conversation with me, and admired my little person in French, not one word of which escaped me.

"My father, who had dealings with the castle, for he gave dancing lessons to the princess's children, often repeated the praises which he had there gathered up for me, and proposed me as an example to my sisters. This was naturally agreeable neither to them nor to my mother, and there were often unpleasant scenes. Sometimes he brought me all sorts of dainties, preserves, and uncommon fruits, for the butler was a crony of his. All this vexed my mother, and with reason; for after I had feasted on all these grand things, I despised our very humble fare, of which we often had barely enough, and I got into the habit of pushing away my plate, and preferring to fast rather than to eat of a dish that did not please me. I afterwards made up for it by eating all the fruit or berries that I could find in the garden or forest, and it was curious that I became neither thin nor weakly, and that I never lost my red and white cheeks, which, as I saw, awakened the jealousy of the painted countesses and princesses.

"There was, moreover, some one whom they pleased;

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no less a person than his highness the little prince. He was a strange little person at that time, and will, I think, remain so all his life; thin and fragile, as if made of china, with a face as stiff and expressionless as a doll's, though it would have been really good-looking if there had been any life in it. In this lifeless way, just as if he were afraid of falling to pieces, he paid court to me. We had come across him in the park—a flock of town children, rushing across country with loud halloos; hunting, robbers, and travellers were our favourite games. On this occasion he came up to us without his tutor, and a silence fell on us all. It was his unnatural stiffness and polite manners which awed us, rather than respect. He was most gracious, and towards me was condescension itself, while I, little goose that I was, felt not a little proud at being so distinguished by him.

"Good God! I was ten years old, full of the idea of being a duchess, and I really thought that he would marry me, and so realize all my dreams. This absurd secret liaison, by which I felt as much bored as honoured, lasted for a year or two before it was discovered by the princess mother. The knightly little seducer then maintained that he had never had the slightest intention of making me his wife, but only his mistress. But in spite of this precocious distinction, which was well worthy of his order, it was considered better to break off our childish intercourse once and for ever. From that time I became again merely a duchess of the future, and my father also was banished from the castle.

"Indeed I only remember to have seen the park and the interior of the castle once after this, and that was when I was somewhat older. A strange cousin, or nephew of my father's, came to visit us, and everything was done that we could think of during those few days to make our habitual poverty a little less unbearable to him. As we could not entertain him

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very well at home, we were obliged to make the best of walks, and fortunately the princess and her children happened to have gone to a watering-place; so, under the protection of the butler, we visited all the rooms, which till then I had only seen from without. My father was delighted to ride his hobby-horse. He was always telling us how this and that had been far finer, richer, or more tasteful in Paris. I could only listen in silence and astonishment, and yet it all seemed quite natural, and I felt that were I only allowed to use these costly things, I could do so as calmly as if I had been born to them. When on the following day our cousin made me a clumsy offer of marriage, and, in order to enhance the charms of his worthy person, painted to me those of his own house—he had an oil-cloth manufactory in a tolerably large manufacturing town—I made a face, which I wish I could see to-day, as I dismissed him without ceremony. It was certainly so truly duchess-like that no thorough-bred duchess need have been ashamed of it.

"No, if it was not to be my faithless china prince, it certainly should not be this commonplace manufacturer. My mother looked at me with sincere commiseration as our cousin went away.

"'Poor thing!' said she, 'it is not your fault that others' (she meant my father) 'should have turned your head. But tell me what you are really waiting for.'

"I answered that I was waiting for nothing or nobody, and that I only wished to go on living as I was. All the same, that was only half true. That I was waiting for no lover you will believe. I have frankly confessed to you that even to-day I can find in myself no traces of sentiment. But to go on living such a life—no, I could not have borne it for ever. My father was growing old and feeble, and many little chance earnings had ceased; for instance, the dancing lessons in the castle, which had been requited in princely fashion. As he wearied, and could read

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very little to himself, one of us had to read him his favourite novels for hours together, and thereby neglect her work, which, however, brought in very little. Why should I entertain you with the details of our miserable household distresses? A man cannot realize all the difficulties, the secret tears, and vexations of a young girl who is obliged to pinch herself in the necessaries of life, for her little bit of luxury is a necessity of life to her; and it was especially painful to one possessing so much taste, and such a duchess-like temperament, that when she has succeeded in scraping together a little finery, she would rather tear it all off and go on in her Cinderella's clothes, just because all this grandeur which has been got together with so much difficulty is after all a most pitiful affair. You see it was not really so very bad; with a few yards of white muslin and a few bows one can dress oneself very fairly at eighteen years of age, and with such a face as God had given me. But unfortunately I could not get out of my head the true elegance, the French toilettes, the beautiful faces and flowers, the real laces and rustling satins, which I had seen up in the castle, to which I with my few pennies could never aspire. You shake your head, my wise friend; but remember the trout is quite determined to get into clear river water, and no philosophy will persuade him to be contented in a stagnant pond, where, nevertheless, many worthy fish are most comfortable. And then, what had I *besides* to withdraw me from these weaknesses and follies, or to make up to me for the non-fulfilment of the fairy story of which I was always dreaming? You, my friend, have your thoughts, your ambition, your pride. But I—I understood nothing, could no nothing, wished for nothing that was worth understanding, doing, or wishing for. I could speak French, strum a little on the piano—the young organist who gave me lessons tried the following year to drown himself in the river

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for love of me, and had then married the rector's daughter, who had chanced to be passing at the moment, and who screamed till people came to save him. After that the lessons were naturally discontinued. I had always hated needle-work. Surely no one would seriously contemplate making a human being happy or compensating to her for the disappointment of her favourite wishes by setting her to knit stockings, make shirts, or embroider."

She was silent for a minute while she looked sadly before her. Her breast heaved with a sigh, and the delicate nostrils quivered. "How cold it is!" said she, drawing her cloak round her with a shiver. "Let us walk a little faster. Where was I? Oh yes, I know. I was talking of knitting and sewing, and all the rest of it. How often have I heard and read, the destiny of a girl is love and marriage, in which she will find the happiness of her life. This was confirmed in the case of my sisters, who, though younger than myself, had their little love adventures long before me. They accepted without a murmur all the weary knitting and sewing, for their heads were not idle when they were so occupied; no, they knitted and sewed the most delightful dreams of love into their work. Afterwards they married people about whom they had had no dreams, but they were quite contented, and then carried on their head and finger work for their husbands and children. I, on the other hand — my prince had also allowed himself to be married, and most suitably, at least so I was told, and, I am convinced, most calmly, as would befit china figures—I remained with my old parents, waiting to ascend my ducal throne. I should still be sitting there, as would perhaps be better for me than to be walking here with you in the rain, and talking of things that are quite hopeless, but my poor dear parents, to whom I was a cause of great anxiety—even my father shook his head sorrowfully now when

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my birthday came round again—were both taken from me in one week, and with them the only tangible object in life of which I was conscious.

"The butler, whom my father in his will had appointed my guardian, was fortunately a sensible man. He saw the impossibility of persuading me to sit calmly in the empty little house, out of which my parents had just been carried, and to wait there till something should happen to set me free. As he was aware of my unconcealed wish to see the world, the good thought occurred to him to try and procure for me a place as governess or companion, by means of an advertisement in a couple of Berlin newspapers. And I really did hear of something which seemed promising before very long. A baroness wrote and asked whether I would undertake the education of her two little daughters, and, as she was delicate, whether I would help her in the management of her house. She required no more than I knew, she had masters and mistresses for all the extra lessons. This seemed to me a real deliverance. To live in a large elegant house, to make tea in the evening when there were parties, to show that in spite of my origin I was, as regards taste and good manners, worthy to be compared with any native of Berlin—well, you know me, and will understand the attraction which all this had for me.

"I prevailed on my guardian to pay me at once my third portion of our little inheritance by selling our furniture and all that the house contained. I intended putting aside the few hundred thalers for a rainy day, or to break in upon them at once should my toilette not be suitable for a drawing-room. During my year of mourning for my parents, when I had had nearly the whole day to myself, I had put it in order as far as I could. But how could I know what the baroness would say to it?

"Well, I need not have troubled myself about her.

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"I was quite pleased with her, with the house, and with the children. I could have wished for nothing better. Only, unfortunately, I pleased her *too well;* for we had hardly exchanged two words, during which she examined me from head to foot, before she said, with the greatest kindness—

"'My dear Fräulein, I regret exceedingly to have troubled you for nothing. You are much too pretty to be in a house where there are grown-up sons, and where young men are constantly coming out and in. You would certainly turn the heads of one and all, and there would be fighting and bloodshed. Forgive my frankness, but I know with whom I have to deal, and at all events I am ready to indemnify you for breaking our engagement.'

"I had no reason to feel offended, and a quarter of an hour later I found myself out in the street, quite alone, and even ignorant of the name of any hotel where I could find a respectable lodging. For in my first confusion I had not thought of asking the baroness, who indeed seemed anxious to get rid of me as soon as possible, before the return of the above-mentioned grown-up sons.

"Only one thing was quite clear to me: to return to my old *misère,* into that little nest of gossip, where on Sunday the flies fall off the wall from *ennui,* and on week-days nothing is spoken of but cooking, washing, and sewing—I would rather have sprung straight into the water. And who was there to miss me at home? Who wanted me? Who would have been really glad to see me again? I should only have found malicious faces, and have heard sarcastic and false constructions put upon my unsuccessful expedition.

"I now walked through the streets for the first time perfectly free, known by no one, expected by no one. Elegant ladies swept by me, carriages rolled along under the Linden, in all the shop windows the most charming things glittered; it was like a bazaar in the

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Arabian Nights, or in the enchanted caves of Xaxa. And there was I, in the midst of all this splendour and bustle, on a most beautiful summer day, with a treasure in my pocket such as I had never before possessed, and for which I was answerable to no one. Suddenly an idea darted into my head. For once in your life you shall know how great rich people feel, whose left hand does not know how much the right is throwing out of the window. For *once* you shall be surrounded by abundance, deny yourself no wish, show the stupid money to which you are so indifferent, and which has found its way by mistake into your pocket, that you despise it, though you are but a poor thing, and ought to be gaining your daily bread. If you were to be very avaricious, and were to invest your five or six hundred thalers, the miserable interest which you would get would not be sufficient to make you happy. When everything is spent you can but creep under the yoke again; at all events you will then be acquainted with the feelings of happier people. Perhaps also, I said to myself, as if a bit of my mother were speaking in me—perhaps it will happen to you as it does to the confectioner's boy: you will over-eat yourself in luxury, and be only the more satisfied afterwards with ordinary fare.

"So that was now settled; for once I would really live as Duchess Toinette. But as everything was quite strange to me in this great town, who knows whether my courage might not have failed to carry out my plan. The turn of a hand will not make a little bourgeoise into a great lady, even if one can spend a hundred thalers about it.

"But here chance came to my assistance.

"I had travelled first class to Berlin. I had long wished to try it, and I had always been secretly ashamed and vexed at going third class when we had made little excursions in our neighbourhood. Now I could gratify myself, and was very comfortable in my

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velvet seat till a gentleman who was my only fellow-traveller in the compartment began a conversation which threatened to become somewhat dangerous. He was very elegant and aristocratic-looking, quite young, and at each station his jäger presented himself in silence at the window to see whether his master had any orders. To his gallant speeches I answered so sharply that he soon saw he must change his tone. From that moment he became all politeness and attention, and treated me quite like a lady, though I did not conceal from him why I was going to town. As we got out he took leave of me with the hope that we should meet before many days in the house of the baroness, to whom he had been introduced.

"That was quite indifferent to me; his lordship the count, as the jäger called him, did not interest me in the least. But suddenly as I was sauntering through the streets, racking my brains to know what I should do next, I heard a voice which I knew calling me, and there was the count.

He greeted me very politely, asked me how I had liked the baroness, and when he heard what had happened, consoled me very good-naturedly. I was not to make myself unhappy, I could not fail to hear of another much better situation, he would do his best among his acquaintance, and, to begin with, as I confessed to him my embarrassment as regarded a suitable lodging, he could recommend me a very good one which he had once hired for a relative. She had afterwards given it up, on account of a change in her plans; but it was still empty, and the landlady was a very respectable woman, who would make me very comfortable.

"This was of course most welcome to me. I only insisted on not taking advantage of the quarter's having been paid in advance, so as to be my own mistress, and to be under no obligation to anybody.

"He ended by taking it as a matter of course, and his

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bearing was most modest, nay, almost respectful. All the same, I was half sorry that I had allowed him to accompany me to the lodgings. It seemed to strike the landlady; and then he knew too where to find me. And what security had I that he would not become troublesome? At all events my incognito was quite at an end.

"But my fears were groundless.

"The day after I had taken possession of my lodgings I received a note from him to say that he must deny himself the pleasure of coming personally to inquire after me, as the news of his father's sudden illness obliged him at once to go down to his country place.

"I must confess that I felt considerably relieved at hearing this. Now there was really no let or hindrance to my disposing of my days as I thought best.

"You know enough of my tastes to be able to guess what sort of a life I should lead if I had liberty to indulge them. Only at first there were various trifles wanting. When I opened my treasure-case, it certainly seemed to contain no crown jewels. Were I to come across a poor family, I could only prove my generosity by a five-thaler piece. And then, I really was too solitary! If one is to establish oneself as a duchess, one needs at all events a little household. When I had lived in this way for a week or two, I fortunately made your acquaintance; then I was quite satisfied, and no longer feared the return of the count, though he wrote me letters which by degrees grew less and less formal, until at last he assumed a tone of intimacy, and confessed to me that even his anxiety about his father's life could not efface my image from his memory; he begged for one line to assure him that his homage was not indifferent to me; he painted his state of mind in stronger and stronger colours, and the more obstinately I left these foolish epistles unanswered, the more passionate they became. That was the only thing wanting to make his acquaintance

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wholly disagreeable to me. I gave little Jean orders to take in no more letters, and if ever a gentleman whom I described wished to visit me, not to open the door to him on any consideration.

"And now this scene yesterday! I could not sleep half the night for anger. What can he imagine? What can he think of me if he expects to gain anything by such audacious importunity, for the jäger of course was only acting up to the orders he had received? What creatures men are with what they call love! Have I not reason to be afraid of a crazy passion which turns otherwise well-bred men into dangerous monsters? And you—you have grown quite dumb, and have not interrupted me one single time. Now do please say one word, or I shall fear that you think me not a poor fool, but a poor sinner."

She suddenly withdrew her arm and stepped from under his umbrella. It was hardly raining, a faint ray of light penetrated the grey autumn fog; she let her hood fall back, and showed him her full face, which her eagerness in talking and the exercise had rendered quite rosy.

"Dear Fräulein," said he, with a smile, "confession in return for confession: the fool and the sinner stands before you, but he hopes for absolution. It would have been impossible for any human being to imagine such a simple and yet strange solution of the riddle. Also—now I must confess to you—the 'respectable woman,' your landlady——"

"What? you know her? What did she tell you? Oh please," said she, with anxious impatience, "do not leave me in this uncertainty."

He reassured her; she had grown quite pale again.

"Do not let us speak so loud," said he. "Jean's large ears have come somewhat nearer."

She took his arm again, and turned quickly into a side path.

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"Well, well!" she urged. "Good heavens! and I had no suspicions!"

He now told her all that he had heard from the woman: for whom the lodgings had first been taken, the understanding which the count had come to with the landlady, the dangers to which she in her unsuspicious innocence was exposed. "I myself," he concluded, "though I often felt very uneasy when I thought of the mystery which surrounded you—believe me, my dear friend, it was only necessary to see you enter the room, to hear your voice, your laugh, to become perfectly calm, and to feel convinced that nothing common could ever have power over you. Much rather was I inclined to believe you to be what you were only acting, a born princess who would one day re-ascend her throne, and would then appoint her faithful servant, who during her exile had sometimes talked away anxieties and *ennui*, to some post where gloves would be unnecessary—perhaps to be court book-cutter, or private secretary, or perhaps merely court bird-feeder to her Highness the Duchess Toinette."

She did not seem to hear his jest. The lovely face was turned to the ground; her hand trembled. Suddenly she stood still again.

"And the letter!" she cried, without looking at him. "Surely you have brought it with you?"

He drew it from his pocket.

"It has not disturbed my sleep," he said, with a smile. "Shall we tear it up unread, and strew it among those faded leaves in the pond?"

"No, read it—read it aloud."

He broke the seal and read as follows:—

"You still persist in sending me no answer. This shows me that you place no confidence in my written assertions, and if it were possible to strengthen my feelings towards you, it would be by this proof of

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your proud reserve. For the future I will spare you my letters, for I hope soon to be able to confirm everything to you verbally, and by that means I trust to remove from your mind all doubt as to the sincerity of my passion. What I feared has happened. I have this night lost my father. That the first words I write, after this painful loss, should be addressed to you, ought to prove to you better than words how closely all that I hope in life is connected with you, and that the decision as to my weal or woe is in your hands. Whether in my present mood you think me more worthy of a friendly greeting than before, I can only learn by waiting in perfect submission.

"Unalterably yours,
"FRANZ COUNT R***"

"If the man is to be judged by his style, we have been rather premature in making the master answerable for the impertinence of his servant," jested Edwin, as he folded up the letter and returned it to her. "At all events you will condole with your faithful knight."

She took the black-edged letter mechanically; her face remained immovable.

"Come," said she, after a pause, "it is beginning to rain again. I don't feel very well. Take me back to the droschke. Oh, it is dreadful, dreadful, dreadful!"

He encouraged her as well as he could.

"If he were now to offer you his hand and a count's coronet," said he, and as he said it he felt a stab in his heart which suddenly took away his breath.

She seemed not to hear. She shook her hair from her face, so that it got loose and fell over her hood; she tore open her cloak, as if afraid of suffocation.

"Has it not become very hot?" said she, "or is it only— Let us go more quickly. I cannot wait till I am at rest, and alone. No, no, you are not in my way, indeed not. I know what I owe you. But—but there

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are things of which one can only get the better by closing one's eyes and crying like a little child. Do you know what, my friend? I should like now—but what is the good of talking about it? You will not understand. To-morrow is your day, I think; and yet it was yesterday, was it not, that you stayed so long—and that shameless man—? However, no more of that. I shall expect you to-morrow. Good-bye for to-day. Forgive me for not asking you to drive with me; it is better so. Indeed I do not know what I say. I—oh, my God!"

She pressed her hand to her eyes, and stood still as if she were losing her wits. He ventured to draw her more closely to him.

"My dear girl," said he, "do compose yourself. What has happened? what is lost?"

She at once drew herself up.

"Nothing," she whispered. "It is quite over. I thank you very much for all your kindness. Till to-morrow then. Good-bye."

She gave him her hand, and seemed quite herself again, as she looked at him; then she got into the droschke, the page clambered on to the box, and Edwin saw that as she drove away she again bent forward and waved adieu, with a long, very earnest look. Then he remained alone in the grey day with his dark thoughts.

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CHAPTER VI.

WHY was he far more hopeless after her frank confession than he had been before? He knew now that his feelings had not deceived him, that all that was equivocal in her position had nothing to do with her true self. There was now apparently nothing between them, no older rights and claims of third persons, no prejudices of rank or possessions. She was as poor as himself, as independent, of middle-class origin; and when this fairy dream, which had been conjured up by artificial means, should be at an end, as must soon be the case, she would stand helpless and alone in a strange world, where a friend and protector would be everything to her.

For the moment it was of course impossible that he should ask any maiden to share his life. Till now he had neither desired nor expected such a change in his existence. But if it were now required of him, why should he not be man enough to work his way out of the "tub," and to establish a comfortable home for three?

If it were required of him! But that was just what he could not believe, even less *after* her confession than before. He had never felt so clearly that all his fire was expended on a rock, that she had not the

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faintest idea of his condition. To have heard from her of all that could be most hopeless, most sad, of sin, despair, of lost virtue, would have been less disheartening than this cold, unapproachable innocence. He returned home much dejected, and completely wet through, as he had purposely exposed himself to the rain in order to cool his inward fever. While undressing he related everything to Balder, not omitting his utter hopelessness. "And after all it will be best so," he concluded, "when I have got over it. Could we receive a duchess here?"

Balder did not understand it at all. It was incomprehensible to him than anybody should be unwilling to give up a kingdom for the happiness of living with Edwin, to say nothing of being so loved by him. He began to gainsay his brother with great animation, to build castles in the air.

"Only wait till she is poor again," he said; "then she will feel the existence of other treasures. Her mind is at all events no ordinary one, and she is so young. She has still much to learn. Are you not a good teacher? Think of all that *I* have learnt from you!"

"Yes, *you*, child!" sighed Edwin, with a smile, stroking his hair.

He wished to add something more, but Mohr came in and related his adventures of the previous evening with the mystical candidate, and how the hope of entering into musical intercourse with Christiane had so spurred him on that he had actually written out that morning the first movement of the celebrated symphony. He was in very good spirits, and in his usual style let off fireworks of sarcasm and quaint fancies, which he certainly enjoyed alone, for the brothers only laughed out of politeness.

After they had dined together Edwin went to his pupil. Hitherto his visits to the little house on the lagoon had seemed to do him good. His passionate

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unrest had seemed to leave him there; the large, peaceful eyes of the girl, with which she followed his lips so intently, had been able to dissipate all dejection, so that he had grown cheerful and eloquent, and had often overpassed the limits of the lesson hour, while unfolding to her the thoughts of the old sages. But to-day, for the first time, this pleasant spell did not work.

He was obliged to excuse himself on the plea of not feeling well, and, to Lea's visible regret, to leave before the task was actually completed.

To-morrow was again "his day." But he could not wait for the usual hour; an unconquerable impatience impelled him to go to the house in the Jägerstrasse in the morning. He was startled by seeing the broad face of the landlady looking crossly out of one of the windows of the first floor. He rushed breathlessly up the steps, and pulled the bell. His foreboding was justified; no striped waistcoat appeared, the shining glassy eyes of the solemn boy did not welcome him. The landlady herself opened the door, sulkily, and without looking at him.

"Who do you want?" she grumbled. "Fräulein Toinette Marchand? I am sorry she is gone. Ah! it is *you!* Oh, that is different. What have you to say to it? You at all events must know more about it than we, who were not thought good enough to receive the least explanation. Or perhaps you are come with some commission? Please walk in. I can now do exactly as if I was quite at home here again."

She made Edwin come in, and followed him into the well-known red salon. Nothing was altered: the flowers, the parrot on the perch, only the cage stood open and empty, the bronze clock on the marble chimney-piece no longer ticked.

"Only think," said the woman, obviously pleased at having at length some one to whom she could pour out her heart, one who was half in the secret

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too; "yesterday she comes home in a droschke,—it was the first time she was without her hired carriage,—and the boy Jean was sent up to me at once to say that I was to go to his mistress. When I come in here I find her maid already busy packing. She herself stood in the middle of the room, looking before her as one who is not quite right. But when I spoke to her she recollected herself. She was obliged to go away very suddenly, she said, and as she should not return to this lodging, she wished to pay her rent. 'Go away?' says I. 'My patience! And so suddenly? And where to, if I may ask?' says I. For I thought, who knows but that I may have the police on me. The mystery, the crime, is out, and she wishes to make sure of not being laid hold of. But then again she looked so curious, so proud and unconscious-like, and after that not one word more did she address to me, except what could not be avoided; but after all I am the landlady. As she was leaving in the middle of the quarter, it would be right, she said, that she should pay for three full months, although she had not been here quite four weeks; and then, say what I would, she counted out six and thirty shining thalers on the table. For anything extra—good gracious, she had never given me any extra trouble—she laid three louis d'or on the table, and the maid was paid her whole quarter's wages, and had a present into the bargain. Then she went up to the birds—the parrot belongs to the count—opened the little door, and strewed some crumbs for the last time, and said, 'You will be good enough to let them go,' and with that a look like lightning, and a bend of the head to say good-bye, and then she went out to the droschke which Jean had been sent to call, and on which her box had already been put up. She took the boy with her, but to which railway station she drove neither I nor the maid could manage to learn. Good lord! what will the count say when he comes back? I promised him to take such care

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of her. And says he, 'You shall be no loser, Madame Sturzmüller.' His jäger was here yesterday again, inquiring about her doings, and asking who the 'uncivil fellow' was who had been to see her. He meant you. So I told no more than I knew—that you only came when she was at dinner, that you seemed very respectable, and brought her books. He laughed: 'It must be something very fine they are studying together; and if I was to tell my lord—' 'Come,' said I, 'why does he leave her sitting all by herself? Such a young thing too! Idleness,' says I, 'is always the beginning of a love affair.' But he shook his head, and would hear nothing of any mystery. Now tell me, my good gentleman, what all this means. Good gracious heavens, if I am called before the jury!"

In spite of his dejection Edwin could not forbear smiling. He denied all knowledge of what had happened, and his emotion on finding her gone was a proof of his sincerity. He said that he had made no inquiries about her connections, and that where she could have disappeared to was just as enigmatical to him as to the landlady herself. The latter never ceased chattering, while he went through the cosy rooms which had suddenly grown so solitary and lifeless. For the first time he entered her bedroom, which still showed traces of a sudden departure. On the dressing-table, among a heap of little empty pots and boxes, stood a tiny little bottle which still contained a few drops of her favourite violet scent. He took advantage of a moment when the woman's back was turned to appropriate the insignificant little relic. With what feelings did he then stand before the bed and contemplate the snow-white pillows on which her head had rested.

"She was beautiful," said the woman,—"even jealousy could not deny that,—and well-made like a princess. But think of me, sir. As sure as I say it, you will hear something of her in the newspapers

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one of these days, and not in that part where you read of the quality's comings and goings, but among the mixed news of accidents and sentences for life or ten years. Else why should she not have waited for the count, who is such a charming gentleman? If any one has a good conscience they will not want to keep all to themselves, or to be better or worse than other human beings, you may believe me. I know the world, and it is not for nothing that I have let my rooms for the last ten years to the highest quality."

A feeling of unspeakable disgust overcame him at this talk. He took leave very shortly, promised to return once more to make inquiries, and left the house in the deepest melancholy.

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CHAPTER VII.

Not one line had she left behind for him, not the slightest message of farewell, even if it would have been too much to have expected that she should prove her friendship by saying: I am going for such and such a reason, to such and such a place. So little was he to her, that she was entirely insensible to what he must feel at her sudden departure. No nomad, who has struck his tent, leaves his place of encampment without throwing a glance at the hearth where he has prepared his meal, at the spring which has refreshed him, though he may know that he shall find the same necessaries everywhere. And yet though she had called him "*friend*"—he shivered. An awfully cold heart she must have, that she could hold the best so cheap, that she could leave the most unselfish devotion thus carelessly, like a little bottle of scent, which is pleasant to the sense, but which can be procured in any shop. And on a being of so superficial a mind, on so heartless a heart, he had wasted himself and his thoughts for weeks past. Indeed the pain which he felt at his present resolve to tear himself free from her showed him only too plainly that the bare resolve was far from putting an end to his struggle. The more vehemently he tried to accuse her to himself, the more

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clearly did he see in fancy the image of his lovely friend whom he was reproaching standing before him, with her innocent mien, with the last earnest look of her black eyes fixed upon him, and he discovered at last that he was only finding fault with her in order to have a pretext for going on thinking of her. At last he concluded a sort of truce with his passionate sorrow. It was after all possible that she would not write till she was settled. Indeed, had she not still one of his books, Daumer's 'Hafis,' which he had lately been reading to her at dinner-time, though perhaps she might think he had given it to her, as he had done with 'Hermann and Dorothea;' and if not, was she likely to trouble herself about a borrowed book, when she was not in the habit of giving back hearts of which she had barely turned over the leaves?

For the first time he went back to Balder without telling him everything. He only informed him that she had left the lodgings. He should of course hear from her at what place he was now to seek her. The news did not seem to trouble Balder particularly. He took care not to say it, but in his heart he almost wished that this might be the end of the adventure. For after everything that Edwin had himself told him about her, it seemed to him more and more doubtful whether this passion which had so entirely overcome this earnest man, who was usually so sure of himself, would ever compensate to him for the sacrifice of all his peace. However much he wished it, he could not feel drawn to the singular being. What he himself looked upon as amiable was in everything the very opposite of this dazzling creature. But of course he was silent, for he felt very well it would be useless to speak.

"'While you were away," said he, "a note came from Frau Valentin. The Zaunkönig himself left it in the shop."

Edwin opened it absently and read. It contained

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the request that he would if possible call on her in the course of the day, as she wished to speak to him about something very important. He threw the note aside, took a volume of a work on natural science, and began to read. Balder, who was busy at his turning lathe (he had good reason for industry, as their finances had lately been in a far from satisfactory state, though Edwin had not perceived it), saw plainly that he did not once turn over; but he did not venture to disturb him from his thoughts. Indeed, what could he have said to comfort him? And so the evening came on. The professorin's note seemed to be forgotten. Only when Balder alluded to it did Edwin suddenly rise, saying he would look to it at once. He was indeed curious to know what there could be of importance for him to hear, and then he went off with a careless "good-bye." As we know, it was his custom never to go away without some jest or a brotherly caress, but he was now too thoroughly dejected.

Since his first visit he had only spoken to the good-natured lady once or twice in the Zaunkönig's studio; she usually quitted the field as soon as he came for the lesson. She seemed very friendly towards him, with a motherly cheerfulness which on her best days reminded him somewhat of his own mother. It therefore astonished him the more that she received him to-day with anxious gravity and a certain formality.

"Dear Herr Doctor," said she, "I asked you to come and see me to-day because I wish to speak to you on a subject which makes me truly anxious. Do you know, you have given me a sleepless night."

"You are too good," he answered, with a smile.

"I mean it quite seriously. If I did not respect you so highly I should not care what I thought of you. Tell me, is it really true? Are you really the author of this essay, or have you some cousin of

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the same name, for whose opinions you cannot be responsible?"

She took a green paper book out of her writing-table drawer, where she had carefully locked it up. It was a number of a philosophical periodical to which Edwin had been a respected contributor for years past.

"As far as I know," answered he, jestingly, "my parents have only had one son Edwin who has taken to philosophy. But just let me see. 'Criticism of the proofs of the existence of God.' Yes, that is certainly by me. The continuation has yet to follow; it has been delayed by reason of my stupid prize essay." He laid the number on the table, and now looked at the professorin, who sat before him with the most lively expression of sympathizing consternation.

"So it really is true!" said she. "And these views, these principles — you still think the same about them?"

"I do not know to what principles you allude. As far as I can recollect, I abstain from all hypothesis of my own, and confine myself solely to a critical inquiry into the views which have been put forward by others."

"Yes; and so it seems. But if any one can so deliberately analyze, and as he thinks destroy the logical proofs of an eternal truth, can one expect him to feel any wish or hope, to say nothing of conviction, that this truth should exist in spite of the difficulty of finding reasons for it—proofs which would make its existence irrefutable even by reason?"

"I might take that as praise of my essay," said he, "though naturally in the mouth of a woman it means just the contrary. With men of science an inquiry is looked upon as the more satisfactory the fewer traces it bears of the author's having begun the work with the wish of finding a definite result, or even with a preconceived opinion. Much more would have been done in my science if passion and prejudice had

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not, even in the case of the greatest, dimmed the mirror of experience and the purity of thoughtful contemplation."

"Much more!" cried the lady vehemently, letting her hand fall into her lap as if with sudden horror. "But, my God! whither would you go? How can you go any further, when you have already arrived at the absolute nothing?"

"And suppose I were now to venture on proving to you," said he, smiling, "that this nothing is just as productive as that other nothing out of which, as pious men assure us, God created the world? I—but I will certainly not begin to philosophize here. Even if I could hope to make you understand in a short hour that to which I have devoted a life's work, even then I would rather hold my tongue. You are at peace with yourself; what further can you wish for? I also, who have quite other needs, and am altogether a different person, am at peace with myself. Shall we not therefore remain satisfied mutually to respect one another in our own peculiar ways of thinking and feeling? Why should we drag the differences to the light—differences about which we can never understand one another—instead of rejoicing in that which is common to us both, and is so beautiful and easy to understand? It is so easy to dispute, so difficult to make friends again."

"You think me intolerant," she answered, with animation, and her pretty, delicately-coloured face grew tinged with a faint red; "but my Creator knows that I am not. I believe with confidence that in my Father's house are many mansions. I honour every true, deep conviction, though it may be as widely different from my own as heaven is from earth. My best friend, Lea's mother, was a Jewess, my daily visitor and friend, the candidate——"

"Herr Lorinser?" interrupted Edwin, drily. "Ah, now I understand."

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"What?"

"Oh, it is of no importance; I know whom I have to do with. There are certain people to whom it is particularly pleasant to act as informer—of course only to the greater honour of God, of Christian charity, and of eternal truth."

"You are unjust to him. He certainly did bring me your essay, but only because of a conversation in which I was obliged to admit that I was totally ignorant of your views, and that I was very little wiser for Lea's reserved explanation. Do not think that I am blind to the weaknesses and great faults of this remarkable man; neither do I thoroughly share all his exaggerated mystical opinions. But even his errors, which spring from a glowing heart, seem to me more worthy of respect, or, to express myself better, are more sympathetic to me than——"

"Than the honest confession of utter ignorance about certain things?"

"If that were all! But must he who knows nothing, or rather *will* know nothing, of that which has been revealed to all who thirst for knowledge, make it his business to disturb the convictions of those who do know, or who think they know? to try and shake the ground on which they stand?"

"If he seriously believes that he will thereby be useful to humanity, why should he not do what he believes to be beneficial? I should certainly not attempt it. I have not the right temperament, I am without the humane importunity, and all the other qualities necessary for the missionary."

"Really! And your essay——"

"Is certainly not written for those who know, or who think that they know, but for those who, like myself, are still *seeking* for the truth, and perhaps doubt whether indeed it will ever be possible to know; who consider the rectification of the limits between knowing and believing to be a work useful for each side."

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"No," said she, rising suddenly, "in this way we shall advance no further. You are much superior to me in logical skill and subtilty, and I see it is only a feeling of chivalry which leads you to avoid the discussion. But answer me one thing quite plainly: is it really true that you not only have no God, neither the one revealed to us nor the one acknowledged by other philosophers, but that you have not even any grief, any feeling of something wanting, no comfortless blank, no feeling of solitariness, when you look around you in a world from which the breath of a personal creating spirit has disappeared?"

"And supposing I do feel no sorrow, nor the want of something more, and nevertheless do not find the world completely wretched?"

She looked at him as attentively as if she must first quite understand the meaning of such an answer. Her eyes grew moist, and stepping back a little, she sank on to the chair which stood by the sofa.

"You poor, poor man!" she said.

"We agreed not to philosophize," he replied, smiling. "But even in a mere conversation we may remind one another of contradictions in which we have entangled ourselves. Would you call one poor who has just declared to you that he feels no want, needs no comfort? Think of your tolerance of which you just now boasted. You will let every confession pass except his who declares that he has nothing in the shape of a creed to confess. The Jew, Mussulman, the fire-worshipper, the fetish-worshipper who takes a stock or a stone for his God—all appear to you to be worthy of respect, and not one of them so poor as an honest seeker after truth, who looks into nature and into himself, and who cannot think that he explains the exceeding great wonders and signs which he finds there by using a formula which signifies everything and nothing. Would you really think it of any use that I should use the same words, when to me they

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mean something totally different? Do you feel any kinship with the idolater because he gives to the stock a name in his language which signifies to you in yours the Creator of heaven and earth? Would it not be more correct, though you must respect his conviction, to say to *him*, poor, poor man?"

"Blessed are the poor in spirit!" answered she. "You will of course dispute the saying, and yet even you will scarcely dēny that all religious feeling springs from the consciousness of one's own insufficiency, that he who needs nothing, who is all-sufficient for himself, does not know the very best, the giving up of oneself to something higher, richer, mightier, to the Highest and most noble, which in fact we call God. And so the fetish-worshipper is nearer to me than the atheist. He shares with me the human need of adoring, of bowing down before something almighty, unsearchable. Can he help it, that his ideas of this mysterious power should be so dark and narrow that in his desire to honour something he forgets that he has himself carved this idol?"

"Certainly not," answered Edwin, gravely; "as little as you can help it that you adore a God whom you have carved for yourself, or rather have let others carve for you. Oh, Frau Valentin, do not be angry with me, but the difference between the poor puppet which the South-Sea islanders look upon as the Creator of the world and the God of our current Christianity does not seem to me so great as to be of much importance. Are they not both carved in our image, the one more roughly, the other more cunningly; the one hung with barbaric ornament, and painted in glaring colours, the other according to the prevailing taste of the period, with more or less art and fantastic device, but still a work of our own mind? I do not allude to the really poor, whom even you would hardly call 'blessed' or particularly fit for your kingdom of heaven, to those who use the Christian formulas for the coarsest idol-

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atry, the meanest image worship. But even the most enlightened, the most spiritual, who are the most earnest in their belief that 'God is a spirit,' what is their idea of this Spirit? Filled with holy zeal, they form Him out of everything which appears to them worthy of admiration or love in themselves or their fellow-creatures. And then they place this being, which exists only in their own thoughts, which they have formed in their own image and then endowed with the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, on a throne somewhere or other, give Him the world as symbol of sovereignty, put the lightning for a sceptre into His hand, and are then fully convinced that with complete power and splendour He guides the stars and regulates the affairs of mankind benevolently and justly. And yet the world is full of suffering; wickedness has the upper hand, there is no equality of goods or of gifts, and yet the All-good, All-knowing, All-just, and Almighty does not move His little finger to improve anything. His most zealous followers are obliged to use the most earthly means of coercion to keep the world even tolerably straight, and when *that* is not enough, when the whole can no longer be a sufficient protection for the individual, one must console oneself with the old ironical saying, 'Help yourself, and then God will help you.' So after all we are to depend on ourselves, on *our own* strength, *our own* intellect, *our own* good will. And earnest men are blamed because, having doubts about the inconsistent stories of the government of the world by the human conception of a gracious, just Father, they make up their minds to get through the world without assistance, and at the same time to try if they cannot explain the connection of things without childish fables."

He had risen and begun to walk about the room as his excitement increased.

"You would make a clean sweep of everything, the

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good as well as the bad," she objected, shaking her head. "Who denies that our ideas of the Supreme Being are imperfect? Who thinks to describe His true nature by means of our human images and similitudes? These can be but makeshifts, or, if one likes, machinery by which we who are denied wings here on earth may take flight as near as possible to Him. Will you deprive the poor creature who is languishing in the dust of this refreshment?"

"I? You always will forget that I wish to rob no one of his religion, that I never wish to incite any one artificially to higher pretensions, if he is satisfied, or to attract any one to that which satisfies *me*. May your flight be as high as you wish, only you should allow the humble wayfarer, who is climbing the steep path to the summit step by step, to go his way in peace, and throw no stones at him from your balloon."

"Who does so? Certainly no one who has understood the law of love, which is the holiest one in our religion."

He went close up to her and took her hand.

"Certainly not you," he cried, earnestly. "You will never cease to pray for him who confesses that he cannot join in saying, 'We believe in one God.' You will probably prefer not to have anything to do with him, as, in spite of the purest love of one's neighbour, one would hardly choose a leper for one's associate. But ask yourself how many of your fellow-believers have advanced far enough in toleration, not only to allow each individual to be blessed in his own way, but also not to be offended at those who have no longing after the so-called blessedness of heaven; who see the circle of their duties and rights, of their troubles and joys, confined *to this earth*, and who do not desire to be more perfect, more wise, or more immortal than is compatible with our human spirit and senses. The word 'godless' is still the hardest which one can say of one's neighbour. Envy, hatred,

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revenge, and malice are still spoken of as human failings, whilst all charity is denied to the poor fellow-creature who confesses that it is impossible for him to realize a personal ruler of the world in the one set up by man's understanding, and the term 'atheist' is sufficient to brand for ever the most peaceful citizen, the noblest philanthropist, the most honest seeker. And we speak of the enlightenment of the nineteenth century; we boast of our freedom of thought, of our scientific success, and even men of science shrink from expressing their most secret thoughts in works which are not even intended for the masses, because their peace, though no longer their lives, would thereby be endangered. Their heart-felt convictions will perhaps be whispered, as if they were a sinful secret, into the ear of some congenial spirits whom they have carefully tested and acknowledged as such, while childish folly and criminal stupidity may stalk abroad in every street, and the holiest things are used by cunning speculators for thoroughly earthly ends."

"What can I answer you?" said the lady, looking deeply grieved. "Your nature is so pure and noble that you may deny without danger to your duty towards your own fellow-creatures that which we call duty towards God. But the great mass of people have not such delicate human sensibilities; to them prayer, the unconscious dependence on the unseen, if you will, the *fear* of God, is a necessary check on their habits and conduct. Will you suddenly tell them to depend on themselves alone, and take the responsibility of the consequences? Or what compensation have you to offer to the nobler, more deeply sensitive souls, who are born with a longing for holiness, in return for destroying, or at any rate dimming, their confidence in the love of God? My dear friend, if you had tasted the inexpressible delight of knowing yourself to be a child of God you would gladly accept

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what cannot be proved, and which perhaps seems childish and narrow-minded to human reason in this conception, and would understand why those who threaten to deprive their brothers of this consolation should be regarded not only as dangerous innovators, but as enemies to the human race whom one must try to crush."

"I understand it, I excuse it, and yet I desire that it should cease," replied Edwin; "for indeed the danger with which the children of this world threaten the children of God is only an imaginary one. We may cause scandal, but we are quite harmless, for as no naturally religious mind would bear the notion of a world without a personal Creator, so no perversion can take place where there is no germ of apostasy to start with, and these weak or even frivolous ones can hardly be of so much importance to you as universal peace, or as a just toleration. I cannot look into futurity, but as far as I can see the time will never come when *all* men will declare themselves of age, and grown out of the tutelage which makes them happy, just as *political* freedom will never be desired by all. Only let there be an end to the measurement by moral standards of the various conceptions of the universe, to the making each individual idea and need of God a matter of conscience, to the calling one to account as a citizen and man for *thoughts* which have a very limited influence on one's actions. Why even that which the freethinkers of the last century acknowledged as the inalienable possession of humanity, viz., the conceptions of God, of freedom, and of immortality, even these have been rendered doubtful, at all events in their popular sense, by the advance of inquiry. I am as convinced as I am of my own existence that the time will come when the children of this world will no longer be looked askance upon because they refuse to believe even in this Trinity. And will not it be worth the sweat of our noble ones to gain such a future?

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Then only will the word 'tolerance' fulfil its true meaning, then conversations like ours has been will be carried on without the slightest breath of vehemence or bitterness, which have to-day crept in here or there, and for which I, who as a philosopher ought to have learnt to leave time to itself, must sincerely beg you to pardon me."

He bent down, took her hand, and pressed it to his lips. She seemed hardly to notice what he did, being full of a thought for which she apparently could find no words; only when he had reached the door she said suddenly—

"Is Lea acquainted with your views?"

He stopped. At that moment an unpleasant feeling came over him which he could at first hardly explain.

"Till now we have not entered into these final questions," said he, "or, as we used to say at school, 'we have not had that yet;' we have not got beyond the Greeks."

"But when you *do* get so far, do you mean to tell her quite openly what you think?"

"Quite as openly as I have told you; but with you I only spoke because you asked me to do so, while as regards my *pupil* I consider that I should be fulfilling a serious duty. She really *needs* it all, from her great depth of nature, and it will become part of her very being. Is it possible that you would be intolerant enough to deprive this very uncommon girl of something which would be of such benefit to her?"

She was silent for a moment, then she said, "I must be quite open with you," and a kindly embarrassment reddened her face. "My old friend, Lea's father, begged me to examine you as to your beliefs. He found a manuscript book of his daughter's in which there were some expressions and sentences which startled him. He himself, as I have already told you, is quite without dogmatic zeal, but he is a true child of God, and is therefore alarmed and

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saddened to discover that his only child's one desire is to be like her teacher: a thorough child of the world, and therefore——"

"I understand," broke in Edwin, smiling bitterly. "You need say no more to excuse him. Give my respects to the good father who will not allow his child to eat out of the flat dish because his mouth is so formed that he is obliged to take his nourishment out of a narrow-necked bottle. If I am not mistaken in the maiden, she also will find nourishment, in spite of her guardians, though more painfully than she might have done. I am the only loser. Her earnest, thoughtful eyes have done me real good. But I might have known that it would come to this, therefore I will say good-bye without ill-will."

She called after him to stop him; but he had already passed through the ante-room, without ill-will as he had said, but not without a feeling of bitter sadness.

"And these are the best among them," said he to himself. "If such things take place in the green tree, how can one wonder that the rotten dead branches and dry sticks, which can bear neither leaf nor blossom, should rustle so gaily at the burning of a heretic!"

He returned home and spent the rest of the day in quiet conversation with Balder, which soon restored him to calmness, though nothing could remove the shadow which had fallen on his soul, torn as it was by passion. They both slept very little that night, and the following morning, when the pump-handle raised its squeak, they had been up some time. Balder was at his lathe, Edwin walking up and down the room with a book, which he was skimming, both silent, as was their custom at the beginning of the day.

Reginchen brought up with the breakfast a packet most carefully tied up and a letter. They had just been left below for Edwin. When he had cut the strings and broken the seals he found a beautiful china dish, on which was painted a wreath of field flowers—

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corn-flowers, poppies, and ears of wheat; on the edge was inscribed in gilt letters, "A souvenir from a grateful pupil." There was also a sealed packet without address; the letter was from the old gentleman, and ran as follows:—

"My Dear Sir,

"You will not be ignorant of the object I have in writing to you, one about which I find it very difficult to express myself when I think of the great respect and affection I have for you. I have never ventured to lay claim to the possession of the truth, but to secure to my child that which has been the happiness of my life is naturally my first object. If she cannot find it in my way I shall of course not force her to do so. But she is quite too young to see the right way clearly herself, and I prefer, therefore, to leave her for a time without a guide, rather than to see her in a path which I consider to be dangerous. All the same, I shall always feel grateful to you for what you have done for her. My daughter, who wishes to be remembered to you, hopes you will accept her little painting, the payment of that wager, which perhaps you may still remember. The manuscript, in which she gives an account of the progress she has made through your tuition, I beg you to keep for the present, as I do not wish her to return to those studies, at all events for a time, and yet I can hardly ask her to destroy these papers which she naturally values. And now farewell, dear Herr Doctor; I wish you every happiness, and beg that you will sometimes think of

"Your sincerely grateful
"Philip König."

Another envelope contained a sum of money, not very large, it is true, but, compared with the circumstances of the little lagoon painter, pretty considerable.

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Edwin seated himself at once at the table, sealed up the money again, and wrote the following letter:—

"DEAR SIR,

"Though I much regret that my pleasant intercourse with you and yours should come to an end so suddenly, yet I respect your motives, and so in all good-will I say farewell and *au revoir* to you and to my pupil. Give your daughter my most hearty thanks for the beautiful, thoughtful work of art, which gives me true pleasure. But that you should be in my debt I cannot understand. As little as you would consent to receive payment for a half-finished picture, so little can you expect me to accept compensation for my poor beginnings.

"Yours sincerely,
"E."

"There!" said he to Balder; "so there is an end to that also. I had better place the bottle with the violet scent on the beautiful dish—two fragile souvenirs of all kinds of luxuries which were quite out of place in our tub. Come, child, we will set to work again. Everything flows on. Must not certain recollections also find their way into the great ocean?"

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BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

A FORTNIGHT passed. The autumnal storms, which had been very violent, had stripped the top of the acacia of its last faded leaf, and ceaseless rain had laid waste the little garden, with the plants which grew in darkness below in the yard, together with the dry tendrils of the scarlet-runners on the arbour. Even upstairs in the "tub," the inhabitants of which usually understood the art of conquering the worst weather by inward sunshine, everything had been strangely sad and cloudy, like those fogs of autumn which rise between wood and meadow, and are only lighted up every now and then by a ray at noon. A heavy weight lay on Edwin, which in spite of his manly courage he could not shake off. The sudden collapse of all his hopes, his open repudiation by her whom he loved, would not have troubled him so much as did this mysterious disappearance and silence. Every hour made him feel that all was *over*, and yet this could not be the end. He had been wounded, and the bullet was still in the wound, quite close to the noblest organs of life. Till it was extracted it was impossible to decide whether he should get over it or whether he should bleed to death.

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And now that he was more at home Balder's health made him very uneasy. During the time which he had wasted on his passion, when he had only seen his brother at the dinner hour and late at night, the latter had succeeded in hiding from him the fact that his time was spent between feverish work and complete exhaustion. Now this could be hidden no longer. A severe attack of spasms caused Edwin to send at once for Marquard, who shook his head very angrily at the unpardonable folly of having waited till things were so bad. He forbade Balder to exert himself, and kept him in bed for a few days while the weather was at its worst. Balder objected smilingly to this tyranny. He maintained that he was not suffering, that indeed his chest felt freer and lighter when he was bending over his lathe. He took good care not to confess that he then thought the less of his anxieties as regards their subsistence, which were growing more and more pressing. But it was of no use; Edwin saw through his equivocations, the more so that, startled out of his long dream, he now discovered for the first time that Balder must have earned double as much as usual during the last few weeks, merely in order to have provided for their current expenses. This was the only thing wanting to make the recollection of that hopelessly wasted time bitter and painful to him. "Silly children ought never to be left alone," said he, trying to scold, and swallowing down tears of emotion at his brother's unselfishness, and of vexation at himself. "This is indeed a pretty business! You have worked yourself to death so as to leave me undisturbed, not only to play the fool, but to be your murderer. Oh, child, all the duchesses in the world, who might wish to turn me into their court fool, would not be worth as much to me as a single hair out of your thick mane, which indeed might lose a couple of handfuls without being much the worse. Instead of doing my confounded duty, and standing

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at the nearest street corner to wait for work, I have wasted my days in the most contemptible slavery, while you—shameful! Fine brotherly love we have shown one another! The one is idle enough for two, and allows himself to be fed; the other works for both, and so foolishly that he very nearly sacrifices his life and deprives the other of his only brother."

Nothing would satisfy him but carrying his most precious possession, namely, a dozen or two of his most valuable books, to a bookstall in order to stave off immediate want for a few weeks. Then, as his lectures had not begun again, he plunged headlong into all sorts of paying work, reviews of new books and other contributions to scientific papers, and with the exception of a few short walks in the evening through wind and rain, remained constantly at home, never losing sight of Balder in spite of his work. Their strict retirement was broken by nobody, except by the faithful Marquard, by Mohr, who came daily for a couple of hours' chess, and by Reginchen, who waited on them.

Something seemed to have happened to this little maiden which had transformed her whole being mysteriously and yet charmingly. She no longer danced and hopped like a little bird, nor chatted with Balder, whom she now helped to nurse, in her half childish, half old-fashioned way. She now suddenly became thoughtful, somewhat absent, and reserved, and in this mood was unquestionably more charming than when, as formerly, she was full of spirits which nothing could damp. She seemed all at once to grow an inch taller, her face to grow narrower, and her cheeks less blooming, though they were still rosy as if blushing with some secret joy. Also she might often be caught standing still in the middle of her work, as if under a spell, gazing absently at nothing. When Balder questioned her about what had come to her, she blushed deeply, and after an embarrassed laugh her

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face would again assume a strangely quiet expression, such as no one had ever seen on it before.

Even Edwin, who usually noticed her less, was struck by her altered demeanour. "Our little house-swallow is thinking of building a nest," said he. "You will see, Balder, that before next spring she will announce her intention of giving up our service in order to become her own mistress. That will be sad! I cannot imagine the tub without this little perambulating sunbeam."

Balder was silent. He had long had his own ideas on the subject, and little as he was in the habit of thinking of himself, yet he could not help believing with a joyful terror, which at times seemed as if it must burst his heart, that he himself was the secret cause of this transformation. The very day on which Franzelius had taken leave of them the girl had begged him to lend her Schiller's poems. She had heard so much about them, that she wanted to see whether she should like them as much as her cousin and the foreman did. The book was lying in Balder's locked drawer, he had pressed a flower in it out of a little nosegay which she had once brought him from a walk.

The verses which he had composed for her birthday had also found their way into it, and he never thought of them when he took the book out for her. The moment that it was too late this had occurred to him, and as the verses explained most plainly all that he had kept locked up in his own heart for many a long year, he could hardly doubt that they would do their duty, and let out his secret. And probably this would have happened if it had not been for that twilight hour in the shop, when the state of another silent being had suddenly dawned on her. Her head and heart could only contain one thought at a time, and so it happened, her literary needs being by no means very powerful, that the borrowed book, which she had laid in her work drawer, was not taken out

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again, and she had no notion of the secret which it would have disclosed to her. Besides, she had not now very much leisure for reading. Whenever she had a little time to herself she busied herself with a certain pair of stockings, the unusual size of which reminded her many a day of their future happy possessor.

But Balder, who knew nothing of all this, had reason for explaining to his own advantage the change in the maiden whom he secretly loved, since now that he needed her care she became evidently more devoted, and at the same time more reserved. His first feeling at the supposed discovery was, as we have said, one of joyful alarm. As he had renounced all claim to the happiness of healthier men, he had never thought of the possibility of things taking such a turn, nay, he had scarcely desired it. He looked upon himself as a passing guest at the table of this world, to whom was granted a taste of the sweet things, and who, after a short enjoyment of its dainties, after a humble sip out of the cup of earthly joys, would have to slip quietly away. It never occurred to him to take his place in the way that others did, to feast till midnight and to empty the last drop. He had therefore given himself up, with the less thought, to this delicious hopeless feeling, because he felt certain of interfering with nobody. This fair gentle girl, with her exuberant health, possessed all that was wanting in him. That she had grown up so entirely in the insensibility of pure nature, without intellectual needs, without education, fancied or real, that every look, every movement, should be a sign of strength, of freshness, and of the most cheerful good humour, attracted him to her by its very contrast to himself. All this had been denied to him, was strange to him, was yearned for by him. He forgot his suffering when she entered the room, he thought of no future, for when she was there she seemed the very incarnation

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of the present, and of satisfaction with the present; and therefore he had never dreamt of any alteration in this intercourse, which was passionate, intimate, clandestine, and yet quite unembarrassed.

And now suddenly everything became confused; he did not know how to help himself, as all that had hitherto filled him with such pure and peaceful satisfaction appeared almost like a crime to him, and was certainly a source of much suffering.

He was, however, but twenty years old, and the feeling of joy soon outweighed all that was sorrowful. Before he was aware of it, hopes which he had long believed to have been buried rose up before him. Why should not a miracle happen to him, as it did to so many? why should not Nature recollect her inexhaustible powers of healing, especially now that the mind was ready to help? And if it were really to happen, and that his sad youth were to be compensated to him by a late-sent health, he might thank his good star, which had allowed him even in his misery to find the treasure which was to make him rich for all time.

This belief grew stronger and stronger, so that he accepted everything which was done for his good with more patience, and without objection, even rigidly obeying the prohibition of speaking, though a loving word to Edwin or Reginchen might often be on his lips. For hours he could lie still and dream, with his eyes fixed on the melancholy cast of the slave, with his head full of verses which he hastily wrote down as soon as Edwin had turned his back. Even his old trouble of not being able to confide in his brother, who had no secret from him, was now no longer a trouble to him. When he had once become strong, and could at last take his place in life, and could feel justified in throwing aside his early self-denials, then he would pour out all his happiness before his brother, and make up ten-fold for the delay.

All this had been going on in him while without

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the acacia was losing its leaves, and Edwin was going about with the wound which would not bleed. As we have said, there was an almost oppressive stillness up in the tub, and even the other inmates of the house seemed uncomfortably chilly and autumnal, like the whole of nature, which grows more and more silent, till the crackling flames in the stove begin, and at last thaw the lips of men. Not a sound was heard from Christiane's piano. The foreman, whose grumbling and scolding could often be heard from below, as long as the windows of the workshop stood open, seemed now to be silent. The window of the old couple opposite was now never opened in order that the thermometer which hung outside in the shade might be consulted. It was clear, without doing this, that the weather was not fit for the throat of a once celebrated tenor to venture out. Meister Feyertag also was out of spirits, though an unusually large number of water-boots had been ordered, and the business was most thriving. His son caused him anxiety; in Franzelius's society he had imbibed all sorts of mad, communistic ideas, and had overtaken the honest bourgeois and man of progress, his father, with seven-leagued boots. All such anxieties appear doubly threatening when autumnal rain is falling; and the longer one has enjoyed in undisturbed thoughtlessness the summer sun, so much the more inclined is one to believe that the end of all things is at hand. Suddenly, however, this comforter seemed to take courage and to make up his mind to give a second entertainment. One morning when Edwin opened his eyes, the most lovely blue sky was smiling in at the tub, and the air was still and mild, as if it were ashamed of all the wild turbulence of the last few weeks; and as good, like evil, seldom comes alone, this morning brought several quite unlooked-for joys. First a letter with money, in payment of a debt which Edwin had long regarded as a bad one, the fee for some private lectures

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on Hegel's philosophy which he had given to a Nihilist Russian. The Russian had suddenly disappeared, and Edwin believed him to be either in Paris or in Siberia. He had, however, preferred to turn over a new leaf, had settled in St. Petersburg, and sent double the amount of his arrears. Balder, in his joy, broke his vow of silence, and urged that the money should be used to redeem the books which had been sold, and Edwin was just forbidding him to interfere with the financial arrangements of the tub, when Marquard came in, examined the patient carefully, and declared that he was saved for this once. But he said that all excitement or physical exertion must be avoided, or there would be a still worse return of the scarcely cured evil. Then turning to Edwin, he looked him keenly in the face and said, "I wish I could feel as satisfied with you; I must confess that I like neither your looks nor your pulse. Only a few more days of this sitting at home, brooding and drudging, and we shall have you gone back to where we were before the evening of the ballet. Confound it! I would rather treat a whole cholera lazaretto than one thinking patient, who is always interrupting Mother Nature, and by day wearing and tearing into lint all the patches that by night she has put on his nerves; or are you still worrying yourself—of course you have no secrets from Balder—about your crazy transcendental love affair? That is the only thing wanting. What progress have you made with the little princess in the Jägerstrasse? Still 'Fichtenbaum und Palme,'* still longing desires, suspense and misery?"

"If it is of scientific interest to you," answered Edwin, with a tolerably calm face, "you may as well know that the whole story came to an end before it had really begun. I should be almost inclined to consider the whole apparition as a delusion of the senses, if it were not for the fact that the mysterious

* Allusion to a poem of Heine's.

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phantom which rose and then suddenly disappeared again was also seen by you."

Marquard looked at him with a sort of twinkle in his light-blue eyes.

"May I ask to feel your pulse once more?" he said, drily.

"Why?"

"Because it is of scientific interest to me to see whether a philosopher, whose trade is truth, can lie without a quickening of his pulse. Of course if you wish it I will go my own way, and leave you to yourself as incurable, and from this time forth look upon myself as court physician to the younger branch."

He seized his hat and stick, as if on the point of going.

"I really do not see," returned Edwin, continuing calmly to cut a book, "why I should trouble myself to lie to you, who are such an infallible diagnostic. But this time you are certainly mistaken. Quite seriously, then, for the last fortnight or three weeks I have not seen the riddle of the Jägerstrasse."

"For a very natural reason," laughed the doctor; "because for the last fortnight or three weeks the beauty has been living in the Rosenstrasse. Oh, you sophists! you use your specious logic to strangle the truth and to satisfy your own consciences."

Balder looked at Edwin, who had become deadly pale. The book had fallen from his hand, he could only move his lips without uttering a word.

"There sits the discovered sinner," joked the doctor. "Oh, my good fellow, lying and deceit are all very well, but one must never be found out. However, I am the last man in the world who would wish to force a confidence which is not freely given. Good morning!" He nodded to Balder, and going out at the door, stumbled sulkily down the break-neck stairs. When he was almost at the bottom he heard his name called, and saw Edwin springing with great leaps after him.

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"Marquard, only one word more."

"What is the matter?"

"I wanted to say one thing to you. You may think what you will, but it is the pure truth, I thought she had gone right away. What do you know of her? Is it an invention or really true that she is to be found in the Rosenstrasse?"

"In the third house round the corner on the right-hand side, when you come from the bridge. Of course the first floor again. I drove past there yesterday afternoon when it was still light, and recognized her at once, as, in spite of the infernal weather, she was standing at the open window. There are certainly not two faces with such a combination of the soubrette and the princess. Half sad, half bored, or as I thought with her heart half full of velvet mantles, half full of Edwin. She was leaning against the window-sill, mechanically crumbling bread into the street for the sparrows. Suddenly she drew back and shut the window. Perhaps she had noticed that I was staring at her, perhaps even she recognized me. However, as I have once for all resigned her to you——"

"That is all right, Marquard. Thank you; good-bye!"

With this Edwin left the doctor standing on the dark staircase, which he reascended hastily without hearing the astonished exclamations which the latter sent after him.

When he reached the tub he struggled to let his face appear perfectly cheerful, indeed he laughed aloud, as if Marquard had told him a capital story.

"It is all right," he called out to Balder; "the tragi-comedy is to be followed by an after-piece. What have you to say to that? We will recommend it to Mohr as the material for a phantastic novel; the title is promising—'The Phantom of the Rosenstrasse' —'Heaven and Hell.'"

"It may all come quite right," said Balder gently,

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suppressing a sigh. "Such a sudden separation-was most unnatural, and who knows whether it might not have avenged itself on you later on; now nothing is lost but a fortnight, in which *she* also has probably missed you."

"Oh, you charming hypocrite!" cried Edwin, who was striding about the room with his hands in his pockets. "Missed me! And who forced her to take this step if it had not been her own free, duchess-like will? Oh, child, child, we won't have any humbug. We must leave it as it is. I have known nothing of her, and she will know nothing of me. And now see, my dear boy, what a miserable weak wretch man is, and especially your wise brother! Instead of being satisfied with this fortnight's warning, and looking upon himself as dismissed for good and all, he can have no peace till he has received a formal discharge, that is to say, if he is admitted to an audience."

"Do you see," he continued, as Balder was occupied with trying to conceal his alarm at this new turn of affairs, "we have our much-vaunted free-will, and the splendid categorical imperative, the boasted specifics against all moral attacks of fever. I solemnly assure you, Balder, that I am not cowardly, I am not so miserably weak but that I could swallow the bitterest medicine if I knew it would be of use to me. 'Thou canst since thou must.' Certainly I can force myself not to steal, to murder, to commit adultery, in fact to keep the ten commandments; for I know that they are in themselves partly holy, partly wholesome, and that there would be an end to all order in the universe if one were not to restrain one's longings for one's neighbour's purse, life, or lawful wife, or anything that is his. But *here* in *my* case, what does the imperative command? what does my lord free-will desire? It has been sufficiently proved to me in the last fortnight that it will be a bad job for the *meum esse conservare* if I simply restrain these long-

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ings and remain away. How can I tell that it will be worse if I see her again? And so I think I will go to her again, and ask her point-blank whether she thinks I am a fool, or an over-wise man, if I again play with a fire which gives me chilblains. Fortunately we are again rich young people," he added after a while, with a smile, "and though she esteems me the more that I visit her without gloves, I should appear quite too sublime were I to present myself at the end of October in a straw hat. I shall spend a little on myself, child, and look about for a respectable winter great-coat; my old one is on a journey, God knows where, with Franzelius, who wore it for his Sunday best."

He could sit no longer at his writing, and talking all the time, half seriously, half ironically, to Balder, hastened to perform his toilet, as well indeed as is possible where one has only one garb, and he finished by again clipping his beard with the large scissors before the tiny looking-glass.

"I really wonder," said he, without looking at Balder, "whether she would care more about me if I were a pretty young fellow like you, so that she could be vain of me, or rather so that her appetite for *luxury* might be satisfied by my humble person. Unfortunately I cannot hope ever to be *necessary* to her. But to be an elegant superfluity, perhaps another parrot or a Polysander pianoforte, on which by the bye she could not play—the prospect is not very honourable, but for want of a better— So! the bush is again clipped and fit for court. I still look somewhat ghastly; this last fortnight has taken a good deal out of me. But perhaps that will only touch her; 'heart-sick, pale, and true.' Farewell, my boy; at dinner-time I will tell you everything."

He was so curiously excited that he embraced Balder, kissed him on the forehead, and then humming 'La donna è Mobile' in what Mohr called his hoarse "transcendental" voice, he rushed out of the room.

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CHAPTER II.

His first visit was to a hat-maker, his second to a tailor. When afterwards he wended his way to the Kurfursten bridge, wearing, in spite of the warmth of the October sun, his new winter coat, he almost laughed at his shadow, the dignified outline of which he hardly recognized. He then filled his large pockets with oranges, of which Balder was very fond, bought several other trifles for him, and felt no little pride in the manly courage with which he lengthened by so many delays the road to the Rosenstrasse. Indeed it seemed to him that it depended entirely on himself whether he would or would not see her again. If he were in the end to knock at her door, it would only be a further proof of his courage, that he was able to meet the danger with such perfect coolness.

The third house just round the corner—now he stood before it. That it was still so early in the day, and by no means a proper hour for paying visits, did not trouble him in the least. And yet he gladly allowed Mohr, who by chance met him just before the house, to carry him some way down the street, and listened patiently to his ironical criticisms on a new tragedy which had created a great sensation the evening before, though it was nothing but a miserable abor-

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tion made up of stolen patches. What did he care at this moment for the "degradation of the German stage," or even for the hopes of his friend that his *sinfonia ironica* was at last on the point of being generally appreciated, since a musician whose opinion was most valuable (he did not confess that this was none other than Christiane) was sincerely interested in it. On the other side of the street they saw Franzelius in earnest conversation with a dirty fellow in a blue blouse. He also perceived them, but pulled his cap over his face and looked the other way. Mohr was just about to begin to review the first number of the 'Tribune,' which he had with him, and which he declared to be an infallible receipt against melancholy; but Edwin suddenly broke away from him, and under pretence of having to give a lesson in that house, he hastened back with rapid steps, as if to make up for lost time, and without any hesitation sprang up the steps. His heart beat far more violently than even on the occasion of his first visit. He tried once or twice in a half-audible voice whether he had enough breath to say, How do you do? Only after he had spent ten minutes in gazing at the bell-handle did he feel composed enough to ring and inquire of the old lady who opened the door whether Fräulein Toinette Marchand was at home.

"She does live here," was the answer, "but is not yet dressed. It is so very early."

"She will see an old friend," replied Edwin, hastily, and without attending to the woman, who made a movement to stop him, he stepped past her and over the threshold. At the same moment one of the doors of the passage was opened, and he suddenly saw the beautiful face, looking more charming in the half-light, in a little morning cap trimmed with lace, than even his imagination had pictured her.

She recognized him at once; an involuntary movement of the head showed that her first idea had been

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to deny herself, but immediately afterwards she seemed to change her mind.

"It is *you*," she said, without betraying any astonishment by her tone. "I have been half expecting you; I know that one cannot escape one's fate. Come in. You will not mind my nightcap."

He followed her silently into a clean room with two windows. His agitation was so great that he struggled in vain to think of something indifferent to say, and, as if exhausted with a long walk, seated himself on a chair near her sofa. Neither did she seem certain what tone to assume. She stood by a stand of flowers, which indeed contained no tropical plants, like the one in the Jägerstrasse, and began to pluck off the yellow leaves, and to tie a straggling shoot to the stick.

He had time to observe her. She wore a loose morning gown, which showed her pliant figure to greater advantage than her usual attire, and the little cap on the top of her curly hair had a kind of matronly appearance which was in delicious contrast with the pale, childlike face.

"I have rather gone down in the world, have I not?" said she, still busying herself with the flowers. "It is meant to look very grand with this velvet furniture and pier-glasses, but, compared with true elegance, as, for instance, with that of my old lodgings, it is nothing but trumpery. But, on the other hand, I can pay for these rooms, and am living with respectable people. But only tell me how you found me out? I thought that having got rid of the carriage and taken the little fellow, who implored me to keep him, out of livery, I should be able to live on here incognito as long as it can last. You were angry with me, weren't you, that I disappeared so suddenly? Look me in the face and tell me whether you were angry with me or not."

She had turned suddenly to him, and looked at him with mischievous, imploring eyes, as if she doubted as

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little that she had been to blame as that he would be weak enough to show her mercy rather than justice.

"Dear Fräulein," said he, trying to smile, "as you unfortunately never allowed me to be anything to you, I could hardly take the liberty of being angry with you. I had forced myself upon you; you took the first opportunity of getting rid of me; it is so natural that one need hardly be your 'wise friend' to understand it."

"Oh no," said she, thoughtfully, "that is not quite the case. Do you know, more than once I began a note to tell you where I was, and then I always tore it up. I fancied it might be better for us both: for me, to wean myself betimes from the dangerous luxury of having a *friend;* for you, because you might some day grow tired of being my *wise* friend, and then it would all end horribly, which I would gladly spare you. You smile. All the better if you see no danger. Besides, it would now be too late; you have found me again. Probably your friend the doctor, who saw me yesterday at the window, has gossiped. I am very glad you are here. You cannot think what a horrid time it has been; I have been almost continually in low spirits, or bored. Indeed you *might* not have found me any more."

"Why, where would you have gone?"

"Yes, where? That was just the question. Back to my old middle-class *misère!* Oh, the mere thought made me run cold, as if I were forced to spring with both feet into a bog, and to sink in up to my neck. To take up the yoke of governess here in town where I had lived as a great lady, that seemed to me equally deplorable. So I made up my mind to go on a few more weeks, and then, when the last louis d'or had taken flight, to shut my eyes and venture on the leap —out into the great nothing. Or do you think that there is still something more?"

"No," he replied, quietly, "and therefore I should

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think it folly to throw away rashly the something that one holds in one's hands here."

"Rashly? How long then must one wait? How soon would you allow a human being who cannot care about this something to take flight into nothing?"

"When he has reason to despair of being anything in this life, of being either of use or of joy either to himself or any one else."

"Very well, then, you may *viser* the passport for my journey without any hesitation. For that *I* am a nothing, a thoroughly useless creature, and at most can make little Jean Jacques happy by presenting him with five groschen to spend in a cake-shop——"

The tears which she struggled in vain to keep back interrupted her. She did not turn away from him, but stood at the little table before the sofa, with both her slight hands leaning on its polished top, as if she wished to support herself by it, and great drops fell from her black lashes.

He looked at her with the most heart-felt pity. He was forced to exercise the greatest self-control to prevent springing up and taking her in his arms as if she had been a child in need of comfort.

"If you bore with me for something besides my wisdom," said he, with all possible composure, "I might give you the most foolish proofs of your existence being a real necessity, a benefit, a spring of perhaps not quite untroubled joys, to some one else besides to our friend Jean. But putting all foolishness out of the question, it must not go on like this, Toinette. You are quite right; any one who spends the day in this manner must at last find himself in the night which has no morning. I see I have just come at the right moment. My poor dear child, if only I could make you feel happy in yourself, then you would find out how capable you are of making others happy. Courage! you must have courage! Allow me to say that you really do not know the life which you would

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throw away. No, indeed," he continued, as she looked at him through her tears with astonishment, as if to say, "Surely I have gone through enough," "you are only acquainted with poverty and superfluity, but between these two extremes are thousands of steps on which a reasonable being may be very comfortable and enjoy the world. There is indeed one thing which he must bring with him in order to find it bearable everywhere."

"I know what you mean—a contented heart."

"By no means, my dear friend; it may be a very spoilt heart, one which expects a great deal. Do you think, for example, that mine would be satisfied with *anything?* That is not the question at all; the heart I speak of must be full of wants, and yet rich at the same time. I am thinking of that curious, inconsistent state called *love,* when one does not know which is the most blessed, to give or to take; when one never has enough of giving or taking, and when one is so taken up with this business, which is at the same time ridiculous and lovely, foolish and wise, that one has no leisure to think of other earthly things, such as velvet furniture or wooden chairs, because in fact the whole question of being rich or poor seems to belong to quite another sphere."

He was silent, and looked anxiously to see what effect his words would have on her. She had got the better of her tears, and was gazing absently and dreamily before her.

"I do not understand you, and you cannot understand me," said she, with a dejected shake of the head. "How often must I tell you that I have no talent for that which you call love? As, therefore, everything, both in this world and in story-books, seems to turn on this, you must see that I am not fitted to belong to such a world. No, it cannot go on much longer. Indeed, if I were not so cowardly, and did not fear pain—but that always holds me back, and

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so it will go on till it becomes still more unbearable, till the feeling of desolation and emptiness becomes positively physical pain, which will make me despise all other."

He stood up and seized her hand. "Dear Toinette," said he, "you are in a state of morbid excitement, and must allow your friend to try and cure you. Will you trust yourself to me? You shall drink no bitter medicine, neither need you have your heart cut out in order that we may see what is the matter with this capricious organ, that it does not work properly, as thousands of others are doing. I will show you a little of the world as it is constituted, and of men, that you may see how they manage to get on, and how they fill up the void of which you complain on week-days and holidays. To-morrow will be Sunday. What say you to doing the same as nine-tenths of our fellow-citizens, and taking advantage of the fine weather to make a little expedition into the country?"

"Gladly. But where?"

"That is my affair. Indeed I must beg you to leave the whole thing to me. Fortunately you have dismissed your coachman, but you must also leave the striped waistcoat at home."

"The poor boy! Why should you grudge him the pleasure?"

"Because a *privat docent* is not in a position to amuse himself attended by a suite. Instead, I will persuade my brother to be of the party. I hope you would not object to it?"

"I? Have I not always told you how curious I am to know what kind of a brother *you* have?"

"You will make acquaintance with a most amiable being; I only warn you beforehand not to show too plainly that he pleases you far more than his pedantic brother. In spite of all my brotherly love, I cannot answer for it that I should not feel a certain jealousy. But I dare say that much which in me seems to you

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so very wise, and which you do not understand, will become clear to you when you have seen a man like Balder. Please do not come in *grande toilette;* I want to prove to you how equally one may amuse oneself the fewer ducal pretensions one may have."

She smiled. "You are really very good," said she, "to take so much trouble for a poor incurable creature. Do what you will, you have unlimited authority to improve me as much as you can."

"Very well, then, to-morrow morning at ten o'clock! *Au revoir,* my august friend."

"I graciously dismiss you, my worthy friend and controller of my household." She merrily gave him her hand, bowing with gracious solemnity; he pressed it with smiling respect to his lips.

"And till to-morrow, neither poison nor dagger," cried he, raising his finger menacingly, as he stood at the door.

"I can hold out as long as that," she replied, cheerfully; "if only for curiosity about your brother."

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CHAPTER III.

"It is all right! Rinaldo is in his old chains," cried Edwin, as he entered the room where Balder was sitting alone sunning himself at the window.

He was unoccupied, for as soon as he had heard Edwin's step below in the yard he had hastily concealed the book in which he had been writing verses, but his eyes still shone with the glow reflected from his poetical dreams.

"You have found her?" said he; "and how did she behave to you?"

"As she has always done. She was neither for me nor against me. Oh, child, if you could only explain this problem to me, how one can long for grapes, which not only hang high, but are after all merely painted! If the moon is inhabited by beings at all similar to man, who can breathe a totally different atmosphere, and who have in their veins a totally different blood from ours, they must be somewhat akin to this girl. Something of the true woman is wanting in her, and yet she possesses all that is wanting in hundreds of other women to make them women in the fullest sense of the word. I have racked my brain, but can find no solution to this riddle."

He threw himself into a chair before the table,

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which was laid for dinner, and hastily swallowed a glass of water.

"And you will go to her every day as you used to do," said Balder, sorrowfully.

"As long as I can bear it. As long indeed as it can go on. For I am afraid that in the long run her uneasy feelings will drive her to do something desperate. I have offered to try and cure her, to make her love life—an inverted Mephistopheles. 'First and foremost, I must introduce her to better society.' But I cannot conceive that I shall succeed in finding an object for her life, or a thought which would bring her real inward warmth, or some work to occupy her during the day, and of which she might dream at night. If only she had a head like that of my little princess Lea! But that is the wonderful part of it; she is clever, and quite without the wish to know; without prejudice, and equally indifferent to all opinions, either her own or any one else's; a good heart without interest in humanity, cheerful without joy, bright without warmth; and I, unfortunate man that I am, am for my sins condemned to expend on this strange variety of the sex as much of my heart's blood as if it were a question of a moral transfusion, such as they are now trying physically. You will see, my boy, that should I succeed at last in filling her heart with warm human blood in the place of its moon lymph, the first-come dandy will reap all the benefit, while I shall have to swallow my disappointment. However, you with your clear-seeing eyes may understand this riddle better than I do."

"I? How should——"

"I have promised to call for her to-morrow and take her into the country, and to bring you too. She is longing to make your acquaintance."

"You are joking, Edwin."

"By no means. I really should like to know what sort of an impression she would make on others

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who are quite unbiassed. In spite of my own foolishness, I am convinced that you will not fall in love with her. If you are dangerous to her, so much the better; perhaps she may then learn what it is like, and I shall then bear with dignity what cannot be avoided. Seriously, child, I should like to see what you think of her. You really must not refuse, the less so as it is Marquard's opinion that a drive in the air would be of real benefit to you."

A pause ensued. Balder looked straight before him, and seemed as if uncertain what answer to give.

At last he said, "You must not take it amiss, Edwin, but I cannot go with you; you know it is better that I should remain at home."

"Better? For whom?"

"For everybody. I should only be in the way, limping all about as I do, and then—I am not accustomed to the society of ladies; I should either be quite silent, or say something stupid, which would make you uncomfortable."

Edwin rose and went up to him. "Can you look me in the face, you cunning hypocrite?" he cried. "As if you could ever say or do anything stupid! I know perfectly well why you will not go with us; you think it is only from brotherly affection and politeness that I ask you, and that you would really please me far better by leaving me alone with my cold flame. But this time, my dear clear-sighted brother, your eyes have deceived you. I assure you by all that is sacred to a *privat docent* that you would do me a real favour by being of the party. I have come to the end of all my latin, and am afraid of being found out in a *tête-à-tête;* she might then seriously dismiss her sermonizing suitor."

He knew he was playing his trump card if he could make Balder think he was asking a sacrifice of him. But, contrary to all expectation, the latter remained firm in his refusal, and as he made his scarcely-cured

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chest the pretext, Edwin was obliged to desist from pressing him.

His real reason he did not confess to Edwin, perhaps he hardly realized it himself, namely, his longing to have a day to himself in which he could give himself up without interruption to his dream of love, in which he could also hope to have Reginchen to himself.

The following day dawned as clearly, as golden with autumn sunshine, as the heart of man could desire for a Sunday holiday. Punctually at ten o'clock Edwin entered Toinette's room. She met him with unconcealed cordiality, dressed more simply than he had ever yet seen her, and she laughed when she perceived his surprise.

"Shall I do?" said she. "This was the costume which Duchess Toinette used to wear in her father's house, before she had any court philosopher, any court page, or indeed anything courtly at all. I hope you are not enough of a courtier, or that your taste is not bad enough, for you to find this common flimsy bit of a frock pretty. Even my landlady, who is usually full of the idea that quiet dressing is the most becoming to me, was shocked at my going into the country with my cousin—for that is what you have suddenly turned into—like this. I am resolved to do the same for you as you have undertaken to do for me; I mean I have taken your cure upon myself. I will make you confess that what is beautiful is beautiful, and that what is frightful is frightful, and that though one may make a virtue, one can never make a happiness or a joy out of necessity."

"I fear," said he, laughing, "that your cure will not succeed. You might creep into the shell of a tortoise, but you would still please me if only your head and hands peeped out."

"Then you are an incorrigible courtier," said she, threatening him with her white finger. "But where have you left your brother?"

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He told her of his fruitless efforts to persuade him to come.

"Then probably it is because you have given him such an abominable idea of me," she replied, thoughtfully; "a picture from life as I appear to *you*—a heartless, heedless, frivolous thing. Well, perhaps he would have a better opinion of me if he were to see me with his own eyes, and I am quite determined to make his acquaintance. But now come, I am looking forward to the drive like a child. We must not keep the carriage waiting."

"The carriage? Humble people only drive from the door in a pleasure-van. Till then you must make use of your august little feet."

"All right; you shall have no reason to complain of me."

She tied the bows of a rather shabby little old velvet hat, and called to Jean to bring her her cloak. The boy came, and greeted Edwin with his usual solemn stiffness. He wore a common black suit, the only remnant of his livery being his high shirt-collars. When his mistress told him that he might have till six o'clock to go to his parents, his open mouth was twisted into a joyful grin, but almost immediately resumed its lines of serious respect.

Then they started, she holding lightly to his arm. The streets were full of people in their Sunday clothes; elegant carriages rolled past them, the sky was still and blue, and when they had crossed the bridge, all the windows of the old castle shone in the autumn sun. She stood still before a fruit-woman's stall.

"It is not proper to eat in the streets," she whispered to Edwin; "but that is just the reason why you must buy me some of these beautiful apples. I feel as if we were masquerading. Why should not one make use of one's freedom? Or when humble people go on expeditions must they starve?"

"Certainly not," said he. "Eating is the chief

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thing; and as to propriety, why you see I have no gloves."

"But unfortunately a shockingly prim-looking hat. If the shops did not happen to be shut to-day, I should beg you to do me the favour of buying a new one on the spot; I liked you much better as you used to be, but it can't be helped. We two must look like scarecrows in the midst of all the grand Sunday toilettes."

"Well, at all events the birds will be kept away from these grapes," replied he, laughing, as he handed her a large paper bag full. "I will put the apples into my pocket. Good gracious! the oranges are still here which I meant to take to Balder. What shall be our first step with all these blessings? Oh, luckily here comes a droschke. We can make ourselves a little more comfortable for our breakfast."

He signed to the droschke to stop, and helped his companion in. As he was on the point of following her, he saw Lea and her father coming up. The old gentleman's face was cheerful as usual, his daughter looked somewhat paler; but for the first time Edwin was struck by the dark brilliancy of her large eyes, and by the grace of her carriage. They also had recognized him; the girl blushed suddenly, the father drew back after making an involuntary movement as if about to hasten towards him. He took off his hat, and Edwin greeted them both with easy friendliness. Then they were carried away in the stream of foot passengers, while Edwin got into the droschke and called to the coachman, "To Charlottenburg!"

"Who was that beautiful girl?" asked Toinette, turning round once more.

"A former pupil. Do you think her beautiful? I confess that I thought so for the first time to-day. As long as I was teaching her—that is to say, till three weeks ago—I saw nothing particular in her face except that she had very clever earnest eyes."

Toinette answered nothing; she seemed lost in

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thought. After a while she said, "And what did you teach her?"

"If you will say nothing about it (it might do the poor child harm that it should be known), I taught her philosophy. However, it did not go on very long."

"Philosophy! Is that for women? I thought it was only for men."

"And so most men think, and therefore my poor little philosopheress might find it difficult to get a husband if it were to be known that she had been a pupil of mine."

"This danger would, as you know, be no drawback for me, if you would let me be your pupil. But I fear I should disgrace you; I have learnt too little and have read too many novels."

"Novels are not the worst preparation for the study of philosophy. Does not Père Goriot give one more to think about than many a compendium that is used in upper class ladies' schools, and which does not contain one single syllable of life as it is?"

"It depends who reads it. Certainly it gave me a great deal to think of. But it was so sad that it cannot have been true philosophy, at all events not yours, for you are always cheerful. The world must therefore appear totally different to you in your wisdom, from what it does to my stupid thoughts."

"Very possibly," he said, smiling; "but we must prove it. You must tell me your thoughts, and I will tell you mine. Afterwards we will see which are the least in fault."

"And does philosophy mean no more than this? When you gave lessons to that young lady, was that all you taught her?"

"Oh, no! with her I began at A B C. I related to her the ideas which thoughtful men have entertained from the most ancient times about the arrangement of the world, and their strange fancies about the origin and end of things, about soul and body, gods

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and spirits. I wager that if you had listened to it all, you would not have been bored; for you also are rather given to be melancholy, and it is much the same with philosophy as with a magic-lantern; there must be a dark background to show forth the clear outlines of the pictures of the world which it conjures up. Then only does the true light come, bringing cheerfulness and peace, while the usual everyday sun, like the common human intellect, is only sufficient to produce an everyday, uncertain, restless twilight."

She was silent, while a charming expression of deep thought filled her eyes.

After which she said: "And is there any goal to be reached? When one has thought through it all, can one know anything certainly which it will be impossible to question?"

"Yes, and no. It depends upon what one wishes to know—whether it may not be secrets of which our little brains never will have more than a distant idea; though certain philosophers, who look upon the phantoms of their brains as the revelations of infallible truth, venture to explain even these. But is not even that a gain? Is it not better that we should learn how much we are capable of knowing, and where lie the abysses of eternal darkness? And cannot you imagine that the way which leads by these may be just as refreshing and enjoyable as a journey through the mountains, past glaciers and fields of ice, rocky ravines and torrents, which must remain quite unapproachable?"

"Yes, indeed," she said. "If one is sure-footed, and has no fear of giddiness."

"One's power will increase by the way, unless one is a cripple to begin with; and then in addition to the pleasure of looking round one, of learning to know the world, and of breathing freely, do you know what one gains besides?"

She looked inquiringly at him.

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"Why just this,—that only in order to get up there, one throws away much of the useless, cumbersome lumber which in a superficial thoughtless state of existence one drags about with one; and when one is up there and so much nearer to heaven, and the stars, one learns to despise, and do without all that rubbish. The air is splendid up there, and when one looks at the earth from such a distance, everything shrinks incredibly, and on descending again one can look at one's surroundings and at one's neighbour with very different eyes."

"Which would hardly be a gain; one would only be more miserable than before."

"No," said he, with an expression of calm joy, as he thought of Balder, of the years of their boyhood, and of all their blessed life of poverty in the bare tub: "it is only then that the true and the good, though fools may set but little store by them, appear in their full beauty, and are discovered to be closely allied to the highest and greatest which have ever raised us above the dreary plains of everyday life. I am sure you would not repent of trying the experiment. Besides," added he with a smile, "my alpenstock and my climbing-irons will always be at your disposal."

She looked him earnestly in the face.

"You imagine that I do not see your drift," she said; "you wish to dispute me out of what you call my vanities, or at all events to spoil my pleasure in them,—that is to say, all that properly belongs to me—my brown hair, my white teeth, and my black eyes. Well, we will try the experiment. Pray begin the lesson at once; of course you must begin by telling me *your* thoughts, and then afterwards you shall learn *mine*. So, 'in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'——"

He laughed, and took a grape from the paper, which lay opposite on the seat of the carriage.

"What are you thinking of?" he said jestingly.

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"To-day is Sunday, and we are making an excursion into the country. What would you say to a banker, who, while escorting a lady to Charlottenburg, entertained her with the funds and shares? To-morrow, if you still wish it, I will lecture you as much as you like. At all events with you I shall not run the risk, as with my other pupils, of being dismissed by a superstitious father and a theological aunt, because of my dangerous tendencies. Neither am I afraid of being tedious to you, for in the first place I cannot imagine any novel to be so absorbing as the history of truth; and secondly, you know my weakness, that I cannot look at you very long without beginning to talk nonsense."

She again threatened him with her finger.

"Do not make me repent of having left little Jean behind," said she, "because I considered you to be a knight not only without fear but without reproach. And now we will breakfast."

In the mean time the droschke was pursuing its way at the contemplative pace which distinguishes the Berlin cab-horses from all others of their race and calling, on the broad road which the trees in the Thiergarten had been covering the last few weeks with their falling leaves. In spite of the beautiful sunshine, the footpaths on each side were quite empty, for the regular stream of holiday-makers only pours in the afternoon through the town-gates. Only a few couples came up with them, and they were so occupied with themselves that they paid no attention to the two who drove by eating grapes.

Now and then a carriage caught them up, and flew grandly past their phlegmatic horse. As often as this happened, Edwin saw that Toinette made a movement of impatience, and wrapped herself more closely in her cloak. The air was perfectly soft and calm; but the sleepy pace seemed to chill her duchess-like blood. He laughed and said:

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"I perceive that with your four-horse propensities, driving on the golden mean makes you impatient. Shall we dismiss our equipage and proceed on our own feet?"

She agreed at once, called to the coachman to stop, and sprang out lightly like a feather, without waiting for his help. She did not even take his arm, but walked on quickly by his side, holding the bag still in her hand, out of which she ate the last grape.

"Why will you not take my arm?" he asked.

"Only look at the other couples," she said maliciously. "Is there anything in worse taste than this sentimental habit of keeping step with one another? Either the gentleman must make little mincing steps like the lady, or she exerts herself to step out with him, which is still uglier. And this is because they are in love! We two have not even *that* excuse, therefore let us each go as suits us best. You will certainly not lose me. Only think—I have not a groschen with me. If I were to run away from you I should starve."

He laughed, and said: "Duchesses do not usually die in that way, especially when they have such black eyes." Whereat she replied, that her ducal state was hanging up at home in the cupboard; were she to sell it, she would be able to live barely ten days on the proceeds, and then not according to her rank. So they walked on amusing each other with such-like innocent jests. He had never seen her in such good spirits, and after having been so long without her, his happiness was complete at being allowed to walk with and to look at her every moment. She really looked perfectly lovely as she ate the grapes, and then when the bag was empty attacked an apple with her little white teeth. She had taken off her gloves, and untied her hat, and the rays of the sun played over her charming face through the bare branches.

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When they got as far as the first houses of the straggling colony of villas, she stood still in order to put herself a little to rights. But even here there were no human beings to be seen; most of the villas were, on account of the early autumn, already abandoned; in the pleasure-gardens (the Turkish tent and others) tables and seats had been propped against one another in preparation for the rainy season, and the yellow leaves had not been swept away. But all this desolation and inhospitality could not damp the spirits of our friends. She—and he still more—were rejoiced to have also the beautiful Castle gardens quite to themselves.

"It is curious," she said, as they walked through the silent paths, and at last stood still by the celebrated fish-pond, where on this particular day the broad mossy heads of the carp scarcely appeared at all through the thick yellow covering of leaves, "I always feel better and happier when everything all around looks grey and dreadful. When at home anything was going on in the shape of a ball, or a shooting-match, or a *fête* of any kind, I was always sad and miserable in the midst of the gay, cake-eating people. While in the park of our Castle, which is nearly as old and venerable as this one, and in which there are many places which really looked as if they were haunted, I could wander about for hours; even when I was still quite a little wild animal, I felt quite at home there. So you see that I do not really care for grandeur for itself; and that my preference for velvet over cotton does not proceed from coquetry. For example here, even without you, my attire seems too mean and poor for these royal avenues. You smile; say what you will, it may be vain and foolish and mean, but it is quite natural to me. I cannot help it; I shall carry it with me to my grave."

Meantime they had reached the Mausoleum of

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Frederick William III. and his beautiful queen. The pensioner who kept guard there was asleep on his seat, and seemed surprised at so early a visit, but on Edwin's giving him beforehand a handsome douceur, he immediately allowed them to enter the silent chamber of death. It was not Edwin's first visit, but he had never been so deeply moved by the magic solemnity of the half-dark interior, for on former occasions he had always been admitted in the midst of a crowd of strange people. Now the light poured through the blue cupola, and over the motionless marble figures, and over the young, living, breathing face at his side, which could not withstand the charm of the place, but stood looking for a long time at the glorified form of the sleeping queen, with a curious look of tension, as if in expectation of something still more solemn.

Edwin at last went up to her, and asked in a whisper whether she was not ready to go. She did not hear him, but remained as if spell-bound till the door-keeper rattled his keys to remind them that they had been there long enough. Then as if she longed for a friendly hand to lead her back out of the abodes of the dead into life, she seized Edwin's arm, and even when out in the sunshine of the park walked for some time by his side in complete silence, absorbed in thought.

He also remained silent, though his heart was burning. She had never appeared to him so worthy of all love, so high above all the women whom he had ever known, as during her quiet abstraction in the blue twilight.

He was obliged to make a great effort to talk of other things rather than of his passion.

"I thank you," said he, "for having felt so deeply the solemnity of this place set apart to honour the dead; I, at all events, have never been so deeply touched by any other which art and association have conse-

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crated. It is indeed the fate of these two which affects one almost unconsciously; the thought of so much dignity in misfortune, of so much modesty and humanity on a throne, so much passion in its most homely shape. They were neither of them very intellectual, or highly educated, but the nobility which was born with them always inspired them at decisive moments with the decisive word and the right way of acting, while a thoroughly citizen-like feeling of duty always made them fill their high place with princely dignity. And then, was it not touching to see this prosaic, uninteresting, almost awkward monarch giving himself up to his beautiful wife, with an almost ideal devotion which was stronger than death; and while he was building barracks and living on in the least magnificent of his palaces without splendour or pretence, always thinking how he could have this house made more and more beautiful by the great master, because it contained the heart of his wife, and therewith the poetry of his whole life? In the end he caused his own likeness to be placed by hers, plainly and stiffly wrapped in a soldier's cloak, which he had worn in preference to the purple, in order to remain in death true to himself and to her. Is there not something great in so much humility, and more true loyalty in this unpretending figure than in all the boastful imperial splendour of his conqueror?"

She did not answer at once. Only as they approached the gate of the park, she said as she lightly withdrew her arm from his in order to put on her gloves:

"You are quite right. There is but one kind of true nobility; to remain true to oneself. Ordinary people are guided by what others say, and beg for information about what they themselves should be. He who is noble in himself lives and dies by his own grace, and is therefore sovereign. Everything else is but pitiful torture, which bad commonplace men who

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are not happy in their own persons have invented in order to embitter the lives even of their good neighbours. He who puts up with it is rightly served, and may become very aged without having ever really lived at all."

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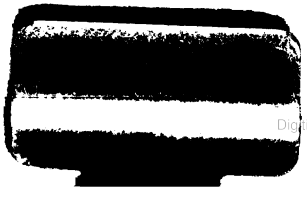

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